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BY
ALBERT SMITH



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OF

LIFE IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

BY

ALBERT SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "CHRISTOPHER TADPOLE," "ADVENTURES OF MR. LEDBURY,"
ETC., ETC.



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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.



At the present time, when so many in this country are preparing for Paris and to see France, it has been thought that a few of the Humorous Sketches both of France and England, written by the late Albert Smith (of tourist fame), would not be unacceptable to a large body of readers. In this hope they are issued.

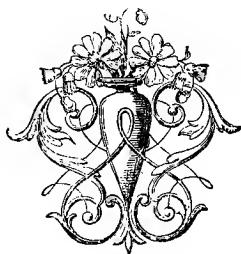


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PARIS AND LONDON :

HUMOROUS

Pictures of Life in France and England.

CERTAIN TOURISTS.

1.—WHICH IS MERELY THE SETTING FORTH; AS WELL AS TOUCHING THE MEAT.

There is something absolutely refreshing in this blazing, baking month of June—at least to ourselves, and, we trust, to you—in turning to the subject of this paper. There certainly never was such weather in England. It looks as if June had become rather tired of riding on the Crab, on which, according to Spenser, “he bent his force contrary to his face,” and had changed places with July, “boiling like to fire, that all his garments he had cast away,” in which primitive fancy dress he was now braving a *coup de soleil* about Great Britain.

There is no cool to be got anywhere. In town it is perfectly insane to look after it except in a sherry-cobbler, or a very large glass of claret-cup, and the reaction of this indulgence is something fearful. We believe the story of Bruce cooking his beef-steaks on the glowing rocks of Abyssinia, for the first time. We would wager on this present twenty-second of June, which is shamefully late for a magazine article, we confess; and harasses the printers; and, with reason, worries the publisher; and gets us a bad name; and must by no means be mentioned as a precedent for magazine writers—we would wager anything light and summery—a hundred-weight of congealed Wenham Lake, or a gossamer paletot; twelve tickets for Peerless Pool; a dozen of iced Seltzer water, or the wettest blanket of any one's acquaintance, which, wrapped about a substance, might produce cold by evapo-

ration—that we could poach an egg, or cook a Welsh rabbit, anywhere upon the pavement in Regent Street, whilst one of the sixpenny Lowther Arcade sand-glasses—which never do them correctly in the normal state of things—was running out.

The omnibuses are insupportable. Their roofs are like the hot plates that we are told foreign conjurors teach turkeys to dance upon; and their interiors are like ovens. There is no shade anywhere; excessive heat seems to have warped the very sunbeams, and endowed them with the power of twisting round corners and far under colonnades. The very fountains are tepid—a few more degrees of Fahrenheit and they would emulate the Geysers; and the gold fish in globes appear to be undergoing a process of gradual parboiling. Nor is the country any better; the lawns are all turning to heaths; the grass is making itself into hay; the birds are too hot to sing, and nothing is heard amidst the gasping vegetation but the restless chirping of hot, thirsty grasshoppers. On the roads horses throw up clouds of dust, and large loose stones throw down horses. The meadows are gaping, in all directions, with model earthquakes, and the breezes are a great deal too lazy to stir themselves; there is not even a draught of air to be got in the third-class carriages on the railways. Everything, everywhere, is dying with heat, except Lascar street-sweepers, Bengal tigers, Lallybaloo Toll Loll, on a visit to England, and specimens of the cactus. All else must be commiserated, and most especially the poor Polar bear at the Zoological Gardens, who looks the impersonation of torrid wretchedness.

And on account of all this we find something refreshing in our subject. The sultry promenade of the gent, the blazing foot-lights of the ballet girl, the close stifling room of the country medical man, and the arid dusty rubbish-heap of the boys in the streets, cannot be thought upon for a moment. But the idea of the tourist is suggestive of pleasant things just at present—of clear still lakes, too deep to be boiled by the sun; and cool rivers flowing through dark gorges, babbling and tumbling along forest slopes under impenetrable foliage, or falling, bright and feathery, for some hundred feet down the shady side of a mountain; of glaciers, too, which might contract safely to supply eternity with sherry-cobblers, could a sufficient supply of wine be relied upon, with the currents of ice water cutting their own channels, and their borders of wood strawberries; of wild demi-civilized places where you may knock over all conventionality in dress, and scarcely know that such things are as neckcloths, black hats, cloth coats, and gloves.

2.—OF THE INCENTIVES TO TRAVEL.

MIGHTY as is the rush from England, when the season is over, to strange localities, yet all are not influenced by the same motives. Many save up at home for nine months of the year, to squander abroad the other three; many more go off to pull in their expenditure. Some go—there are really invalids—for health; others, hypochondriacs, to see whether the foreign doctors cannot find something really the matter with them; others go to write books, and others to make sketches; but by far the greater proportion travel from motives of popular imitation, known commonly as fashion. Take the members of a family in whatever circle you please, and you will find that, however high they may themselves carry their heads, there is somebody whom they look up to, and studiously endeavour to imitate in every particular of their domestic or family existence. This feeling extends both ways in the scale of society, affecting every link of the great chain. Let us attempt to show, in a series of graduated examples, how it sends everybody travelling, as soon as the curtain of the opera has descended upon the last twinkling feet of the ballet, the last speech has provoked a cheer within the walls of St. Stephen's, and the last grand *réunion* of the season has collected the long lines of private and lamped carriages along the sides of Piccadilly and the streets that *débouchent* into it.

Rank the First.

The Countess of Princeton is an acknowledged leader of the aristocratic circle. Her name is always amongst the ladies patronesses of the most exclusive *réunions*, and the list of royal and patrician guests at her parties occupies half a column of the *Morning Post*. She has one or two daughters; the second, Lady Blanche Rosebud, is very beautiful, and the Right Honourable Viscount Hampton has paid her some attention during the season. He is young, and handsome, and very rich. So that when it is ascertained Lord Hampton is going in his yacht—the finest in the R. Y. C.—to Naples, Lady Princeton settles to go there as well, in the hopes that a twilight lounge in an orange grove, or a sleepy cruise along the bay, with the not unimportant accessories of skies, climate, and general associations, may bring about a proposal; and so we soon read amongst the departures—"The Earl and Countess of Princeton and Lady Blanche Rosebud, from Belgrave House, for Naples."

Rank the Second.

Lady Wingfield reads the above paragraph, and forthwith determines to go abroad. Sir John Wingfield is only a knight, but of tolerably good family; and his possessions and interest are so great in a county, of which it is in contemplation to start Hampton as a representative at the next election, that the Countess of Princeton finds it necessary to notice the family. Hence they are invited to entertainments at Belgrave House, and the brilliant *fêtes* at the velvet-lawned, river-washed villa at Twickenham. Hence the Countess herself presented the pretty trembling Amy Wingfield at Court. *Par conséquence*, Lady Wingfield imitates the Princetons in everything; not servilely, but still she imitates them; and when she finds that they are going to Naples, and hears further that they will return through Switzerland to Baden, she determines to go to the latter place, and be thrown in their way without the appearance of hunting them up; and she knows, furthermore, that this will annoy The Haggis, a great Scotch chieftain, whose family turn up their noses even more than nationally at the Wingfields, but, nevertheless, have not the *entrée* at Belgrave House, and are going to Baden also. For in every rank of life there is a Mrs. Grundy; each sphere has its "Browns" to astonish; and so, in a day or two afterwards, there is another fashionable departure in the *Morning Post*, and the world learns that the Wingfields are gone to Baden.

Rank the Third.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown Holland visit Lady Wingfield. Their names were formerly Mr. and Mrs. Holland, but somebody left them some money and the name; and it is difficult to tell which they were most pleased with. Whereon they left Upper Bedford Place, Russell Square, and took such a house! one of the most elegant in the new city that has risen out of the ground between the Edgware Road and the Bayswater tea-gardens—all Louis Quatorze and candelabra. And they took some new friends with the house—the Counts Patchouli and Corazza, and Colonel Grab of the Spanish Infantry, and other distinguished persons, including crowds of scarecrow men in mustachios, whom nobody knew, and with whom their parties were always over-done. The Wingfields are the great people, however, of their acquaintance, and they determine upon following them at once to Baden,

making no attempt to conceal the manner in which they imitate them, but thus expressing the sincerest flattery.

Rank the Fourth.

The Higgses are retired tradesfolks, and live at one of those houses at Clapham which you always see lighted up coming home from the Derby. Our friends above notice them, because Mrs. Higgs's carriage is at times very convenient for Mrs. Brown Holland to go out in; and Mrs. Higgs is too happy to lend it, in return for the patronage the lady bestows upon the Higgs's girls generally. There are three daughters, who have all been educated at Miss Burton's, at Boulogne, and so speak French very well; and as soon as Mrs. Higgs finds that the Hollands are going out of town, she tells Mr. Higgs that it is absolutely incumbent upon them to go too. Mr. Higgs does not at first see the necessity, but is obliged at last to consent, and Paris is determined on. They do not know much about Baden, and are not to be trusted a great way by themselves in the German language. Besides, Mrs. Holland persuades them from going there, as she does not altogether wish the Wingfields to see how intimate she is with the Higgses, and tells them that there is very little amusement at any of the German baths. So they finally settle upon Paris, by Mrs. Brown Holland's recommendation to an excellent hotel, stopping a little while at Capecure for bathing.

Rank the Fifth.

Whilst Mr. Higgs was in trade, Mr. Startin was his head confidential clerk, and in consequence of this, Mr. and Mrs. Startin, who live at Islington, and have more children than even married clerks in general are surrounded by, are asked once a year to dine with the Higgses, the party being arranged for the purpose. Be sure that the Hollands are not amongst the guests on this occasion. Well, the Higgs girls take Mrs. Startin into their room, and are quite affable, and show her the hothouse, and give her some flowers, and play new polkas to her, and ask her where she is going this year. To which Mrs. Startin answers she don't exactly know, nor indeed does she, for with her little family a change is not so easily managed; but this puts into her head that she ought to go somewhere; and so when she leaves at night with Mr. Startin, in a cab, which will be dismissed at the Elephant and Castle for the Islington omnibus, she tells him that they must really go out of town, or else "it will seem so strange!" Within

ten days they are all at Ramsgate—a start rendered more speedy by the complaint of Mrs. Startin that that nasty pain has returned to her chest, and she is sure that nothing but warm sea-bathing will remove it.

Rank the Sixth.

In the counting-house wherein Mr. Startin at present presides is a junior clerk, Mr. Tiddy. He lives somewhere up very high behind Crosby Hall, and dines at Bucklersbury during the week, and on Sundays very often strides up to Islington, where he finds a knife and fork at Mr. Startin's table always laid for him; and in the evening he takes the children for a walk along the New River. He believes in the family to the fullest extent, and pays the utmost deference to Mr. Startin's opinion in everything; so that when he finds that they are going out of town, he intimates that he ought to go as well. But as leave of absence is difficult for minor clerks to procure, Mr. Tiddy can only go within an hour or two of Mincing Lane, and therefore he takes a moderate bedroom at Gravesend, looking forward still to Sunday, for a glimpse of the sea, when he contrives to pay a visit to the Startins at Ramsgate, not a little gratified at showing them that he also can have a holiday.

And by these and similar influences are the autumnal tourists determined, acting on each other's opinions in such regular gradations, from the proudest to the humblest, that with very little difficulty a perfect "Horse-that-Jack-built" kind of rhyme might be formed upon their migrations.

3.—OF THE CONVENTIONAL TOURIST.

THERE is another class distinct from the ranks we have just enumerated, and that is composed of the tourists who travel, not from any particular enjoyment that it gives them, but because they think it proper to do so; just as people eat salt fish on Ash Wednesday. Mr. Julius Praps may be taken as a type of this class. We will describe him.

As August approacheth, he sayeth that he hath an invitation to shoot over ten thousand acres of moor, but that it is a bore, and he meaneth to travel. He letteth his mustachios grow thereby, and buyeth a handbook, a knapsack, and a pair of shoes; he ordereth a blouse, and pervadeth London after passports. He also getteth a journal, and a solid sketch-book; but after the first

week he useth neither; and thus he starteth for Boulogne, on his way to Switzerland and Italy.

At Boulogne he seeth much novelty, not having been on the Continent before. He speaketh frightful French, but, in his innocence, thinketh it the thing; he drinketh much brandy, because it is cheap, and also claret, and well-nigh getteth drunk. Being green abroad, he describeth a diligence that he hath seen, as a wonderful thing, to the company at the *table d'hôte*, and sayeth that it is droll to hear the children speak French; both which things have been frequently done before. He maketh a purchase of a pair of large fur gloves, not that he wanteth them, but he is struck with the novelty and price; and afterwards he knoweth not what to do with them.

Formerly he took a place in the *coupé* because it was genteel, and looked with disdain upon the "bad style of men" that loved the *banquette*, nor did he commune with them when they stopped for dinner at Abbeville.

At Paris he goeth to Meurice's, or Lawson's, and seeth the sights by rule, as they are put down in the handbook. He formeth his notions of Paris in this wise: He stayeth at an English hotel, and is waited on by English servants. He meeteth nought but English people at the *table d'hôte*; he hath an English *laquais de place*, and readeth the English papers. He buyeth even English things to take home with him, at shops where they write up "English spoken here," and speaketh English himself all day long. And then he sayeth to himself, "When I get home I will write a book upon Paris and its people." He thinketh it right to dine once at Véry's, or Phillippe's, and once at the Trois Frères; and delighteth in ordering the dinner himself, albeit he maketh wild shots at the dishes, and if there is a party of three or four, amazeth the *garçon* by ordering a portion apiece for everybody. He doth not much like the French theatres, but goeth as a duty, and laugheth with the audience, as do many at the French plays in London; but he understandeth not a line he heareth; and therefore doth he prefer the Cirque. He findeth that his clothes, brought from London, produce not the effect he desireth in Paris, and thereon riggeth himself out in the Palais Royal. But he doth not approach nearer to the Frenchman for all that, and when he goeth to the Chemin de Fer, and asketh, "Esker eel e ar oon train, mossieu, poor Genave?" he is disgusted to hear the clerk reply incontinently, "Yes, sir, every morning at eight o'clock."

In Switzerland he walketh much, but hath a guide to carry his knapsack, and telleth people at inns that he hath an intention

of going up Mont Blanc. But the intention vanisheth as he approacheth Savoy, and at Chamouni disappeareth altogether, inasmuch as he there contenteth himself by saying that he knoweth a man who hath been up once. He buyeth a paper-cutter of white wood at the Righi Culm for his study table, and a salad spoon and fork for his aunt, from whom he hath expectations, and who asketh him much on his return about William Tell, with whom she thinketh he must have been acquainted, her whole idea of Switzerland being confined to that apocryphal (as it really appears) individual, and the time of the Swiss Boy. But he knoweth little except that which he readeth in the handbook; nor doth he ever deviate from the route they lay down in the slightest degree. He goeth to Grindelwald, and sayeth that the Glacier is only a lot of ice, but still it is proper to see it, not as an amusement, but to say afterwards that he hath been there, which appeareth to be the great end of all his travels. And when he starteth for Italy, he crosseth the Simplon in the night, to save time and get the quicker to Italy, whereby he doth not get a sight of any portion of the pass. But at Duomo d'Ossola he readeth all about it in the handbook, and his end is answered. And now he taketh care not to let anything astonish him, or at least to appear as though it did, thinking that he is an experienced traveller. And he joineth little in the society of the *table d'hôte*, but taketh notes as if on the sly, that the company may think him to be a great author, travelling in disguise, to write a large book. And, indeed, he hath an intention of trying to do something for a magazine on his return; but he findeth, to his disgust, that it hath been done before.

At Venice he hireth a gondola, and boasteth that he hath seen all the churches in one day; and he goeth through the ducal palace, not that he findeth interest in its associations, but because it is a place that must be visited solely to talk of afterwards. He stoppeth at Venice twenty-four hours; after which he pronounceth it the "slowest" place he was ever in, and declareth that it hath been much overrated. At Verona he goeth to the tomb of Juliet, whom he confuseth with some actress, but cannot call the tragedy to mind with distinctness: nevertheless, he buyeth a model of her tomb, and determineth to read it on his return, or go and see it acted. And then he visiteth every place mentioned in the handbook, the which he yawneth over, as doth an admirer of Verdi at Exeter Hall: and when he seeth the amphitheatre, he sayeth to himself, "This is very fine, but not to be compared to the Cirque Olympique in the Champs Elysées, or even Astley's."

He devoteth two entire days to Florence, and is on his legs

from six in the morniug until ten at night, looking at every picture aud statue, not to admire it, but to say that he hath seen it, on future opportunities. For, as far as enjoyment goes, he thinketh the Venus equally good which adorneth the shop of the ingenious Italian opposite the stage-door of Drury Lane Theatre.

Rome he liketh not, nor taketh pleasure in its remains; for he careth not for the ancients, his associations being alone connected with dog's-eared Virgils and ink-stained Commentaries. But his haudbook directeth him to see everything, and he laboriously obeyeth it, albeit he findeth nothing so agreeable as our own Colosseum in the Regent's Park; and wisheth that the Pope would eugage Mr. Bradwell to renovate the city. In his heart he voteth Rome a "sell," and hateth the ruins, from recollections of the cane and Latin mark.

And thus he yawneth and fatigueth himself for three months about parts of Europe, having become footsore to obtain glory at home, as pilgrims go to Mecca to be put on the free list of the Prophet's Paradise, and he remembereth nothing that he hath seen, no more than the passeuger by an express train can call to mind the stations that he shooteth by. But he believeth that he hath attained a higher rank in life by being able to talk of where he hath been; and he remarketh, at dinner parties, "Once, when I was crossing the Simplou," or "During my residence at Florence," wheuever an opportunity occurreth, and sometimes when it doth not. And if by luck he encountereth a tourist who hath not been to Florence, but speaketh highly of Danneker's Ariadne at Frankfort, he sayeth forthwith, "Ah, but you should see the Venus de Medici." Yet he recollecteth it but slightly, and the other he hath no notion of, beyoud that furnished by a *posé plastique*.

But the greatest pleasure, after all, that one tourist knoweth is to talk down another, and to this end chiefly doth our traveller look for distinction.

THE DILIGENCE.

A SKETCH ON THE ROAD.

“ALLONS, messieurs, montez! Monsieur Schmeet! Numéro un!”

There is no response.

“Monsieur Smeece!”

Still no rejoinder.

“Monsieur Schmits!” cried the *conducteur*, after an oath; and then, having some vague idea that “Smith” is the name intended, and that it must be meant for ourselves, we climb up the step, and tumble down into the corner of the *intérieur*, doomed to be our prison for the next thirty hours.

Thirty hours! All the people now clustering about the office will dine, and go to bed, and sleep, and get up again, and dine once more, and we shall still be in that corner! That foreign gentleman in spectacles and a felt hat, without a shirt-collar, who has not washed his face, and is breakfasting from a cigarette, will get through the day at his “bureau,” and idle away the evening at his *café*, and sleep—the chimney-pots only know where—and perhaps be here again to-morrow morning; and the corner will still contain us! They have written up over the door, “Dijon in thirty hours!” as if it was an achievement of rapidity. We look upon it with different views: to us it only suggests a note of alarm instead of admiration, that we have all that time to pass before we get there.

The lading is completed. The men have pulled tight the leathern rick-cloth-looking coverlid by the thongs and iron rings; the three leaders are fighting, and neighing, and being sworn at by the postillion, as they try to turn round and run against their own splinter-bars; the passengers have all climbed into their respective places, and settled down in them hopelessly, as though they meant to grow there for ever; the *conducteur* mounts on to the box—he will not come into the *banquette* until night approaches—with his portfolio between his teeth; and at last we are off.

“Hi!” The huge whip cracks like a succession of discharges from a mighty electrifying machine, as we lumber round the corner, and every thin pane of glass in the hatter’s shop rattles

with the vibration of our great vehicle over the stones. The signs and names, and people who come to the door to see us pass, go by like objects in a magic lantern. We catch them rapidly one after another—"Nouveautés et Rouenneries." "Cachot, Ferblantier-Lampiste en tous genres." "A la Ville de Lyon." "Café du Midi." "Boidart-Minet, Marehand de Vins, en gros et en détail." "Au Sanglier. Chareuterie." "Maison succursale de la Belle Jardinière: Vêtements d'homme: grand choix de vingt-cinq mille paletots de Paris"—and then more streets, and gapers, and carts that will get in the way, and rattling shop-windows, and oaths, and whip detonations, until we squeeze through a small arch, about half the size every way of the diligence, and emerge into the country, when the excitement suddenly ceases, and the pace drops from the display of streets to the heavy six miles an hour that we are doomed to for the rest of the journey. We look for the first time at our companions. They are all foreign; and, as such, have crammed the straps of the roof with those wonderful caps, baskets, sticks, umbrellas, and odd parcels, that you only see abroad. An old man is opposite to us, with a black velvet cap and snuffy neckcloth tie; and we know we shall have many encounters with his legs during the night. Then there is a woman in a cap, who appears to be going hundreds of miles with no other luggage than a bird-cage and a basket, in which last are some sour plums and pieces of bread. Next to us is a dirty man with a velvet coat and two days' beard, who has been eating garlic, and has no luggage at all. And the other passengers are two fat women, who will look worse, we know, when they wake up in the morning than it is possible to conceive.

Why do all lower-class French women get so fat and hideous, and have the air of sinking at once into monthly nurses after they turn forty? The matron, who forms so beautiful a class of our unequalled English females, is not known amongst them: the "*grosse maman*" of Paul de Kock and Daumier is really and truly their only phase of maturity. They can't help it, to be sure; but they might avoid light jean trodden-over boots and short petticoats under similar circumstances.

"Hi!" We are crawling on. The people have pulled up all the windows, to stew and swelter according to their wont; for your foreigners have a great dislike to fresh air. We have, however, the command of one pane, and we let this down, and resolutely keep it so; it is more agreeable, even with the dust and flies.

Oh! don't begin to talk, there's good people: your conversation is as wearying and uninteresting as that of farmers in an up

Monday morning train. We know all you are about to say: you are sure to tell one another where you have come from and where you are going to; and it is all nothing when we know. Your affairs, too, have little moment in them. Do you imagine, madame, that it can possibly beguile our time, or interest us, to know you have a sister married at Dôle, and that last year she went for two weeks with her husband to Paris? We shall not utter any of those exclamations of surprise at the remarkable occurrence that your compatriots will: tell them, and they will be astonished; but don't bore us. It is nothing to go to Paris—it is not, indeed; even the Lord Mayor did it the other day. And what is there in the fact of your married sister living at Dôle? She must live somewhere; and why not there? It is a dull, commonplace town enough. If she had chosen to live half way down the crater of Vesuvius, the position might have interested us.

They are all off; and now they won't stop for some hours. The old man in the velvet cap informs the society that he has something the matter with his skin, and is going to some famous baths in consequence. We don't see the necessity of his mentioning that; but immediately all the others tell him that they have had relations with refractory skins, and each recommends a different course; and this pleasing subject, and the observations it gives rise to, last full two hours.

"Hi!" Still the monotonous cry of the postillion, and the djing-djing-djing of the bells on the horses' headpieces, as they walk at a snail's pace up a small rise. A miserable beggar knows they always walk up here, so he lies in wait at the bottom, and whines by our side all the way to the top. Presently we come to an inn where they change. We are hurried into a rude *salle-à-manger*, where there is feeble soup and tasteless bouilli, and something very nasty made with veal, and a thin warm fowl with cold water-cresses, and some hard pears and rough wine and sourish bread, and three francs to pay. But we eat eagerly and pay cheerfully; anything for a relief from the dusty *intérieur*. Only the *coupe* dines with us; the others have some *potage* and an *omelette*, and pay sixteen *sous*, at a side-table. One woman—she with the unripe plums—makes a light repast without leaving the diligence; and, another in the *rotonde*, finishes a hard-boiled egg, which she has fished up from amongst the cherries, rags, bird-seed, and chocolate crumbs of her basket. At last the sun goes out of our eyes, and night comes on; the passengers have got quiet—some of them, even now, are having a dusty doze; and we begin to think about sleep.

Only to think about it, though. We never yet slept in a carriage, and we don't suppose this night will be different to the others. The corner is uncomfortable; you can't lay your head against it for your shoulders, and the loop at the side of the window is too high up, or too low down. At all events, it is useless; for when you put your elbow in it and rest your head upon your hand, and you think you are all right, it flies away and lets your face down suddenly, and chucks your chin, perhaps, and you are much worse off than ever. All the old programme is gone through once more. You arrange your legs with your neighbour for the fiftieth time, and place your cheek gravely and philosophically against the side of the vehicle, and say to yourself, "Now I will go to sleep." But we do not, still. After flattering ourselves that we are falling off gently, we open our eyes, which we closed to strengthen the belief, and find that we are as wide awake as ever; and so, for a little diversion, we wind up our watch, rearrange our legs, and then shut our eyes again. Nearly off, by Jove! We lost our train of thought, and fancied we were in another place, surrounded by strange people. Can we have been asleep long? Alas, no! our watch has not made half a minute since we wound it up, and we are more wakeful than ever. The ehins of our fellow-passengers have dropped upon their breasts, and they are dreaming. For us, we can still hear the "Hi!" of the postillion and the djing-djing-djing of the rumbles. And yet we are desperately tired. A sofa, a rug—nay, the boards, with something to put our head upon—would be Paradise.

It is very evident that we cannot go to sleep leaning on our right side, so we turn over on our left. That will do beautifully. No, it won't; it is not so comfortable as the other. Then we sit upright, and lean our head back, as if we were going to have a tooth out; that is worse than all. Oh, dear! oh, dear! we could kick all the people violently in our watchful irritability. How nice it would be to be in bed!

At last we get into a wide-awake, dogged, open-eyed state of watchfulness that lasts quite through the night. We are reconciled now; we shall not sleep, and so we bear it patiently, in that dead calm of irritation which attends the later stages of the nettlerash, after having scratched your wealed skin raw with a comb, or raised it to red heat with your hardest hair-brush. Heigho! we give a long, wearied yawn, and look out at the stars, for we do not even shut our eyes now—we have found out the failure.

Gaunt trees pass the windows in endless procession; thus we go through a village locked in repose, with nobody stirring but the man with the lantern at the *relais*. The lamp of the diligence

shines on a board, and we read, "Messageries Générales de Cail-
lard et Cie, Rue Saint Honoré, No. 130, Paris." We have read
that often before, but we have nothing else to do. There is a
clumping about of wooden shoes, a dialogue in a rude, incompre-
hensible *patois*, a neighing and fighting of the leaders, a string of
French oaths, and then the postillion once more cries "Hi!" and
the bells jingle as we are on the road again.

At last morning comes—there is one consolation, it always must,
if you wait for it—and we can see our companions, including the
new one, who came in in the night, when the dirty man got out.
They are wonderfully wrapped up, and do not look pretty; but
we expect we are nothing remarkable ourself. Our eyes are
smarting, and we feel caked with dust—French dust, too—not
common road powder, but plaster of Paris, that would take a
mould of our face if it came on to rain.

We come to a long hill, and the *conducteur* asks us to walk up
it. Not very conscious of what we are about, we join in the
blushing train of *scaramouches* who follow the diligence; and
then, at the top, climbing and diving once more into our destined
corner, we re-arrange our legs with our *vis-à-vis*, dry-rub our face
with a pocket-handkerchief, and prepare for six hours more misery,
whilst the postillion still cries "Hi!" and there is no cessation to
the djing-djing-djing of the bells.

A PLEA FOR BOULOGNE.

WE never respect old gents—for there are old gents as well as young ones—who, not being able to get beyond a few phrases of the French conversation-book, and uttering even these with an unintelligibility which makes the French maid request they will speak English—get enthusiastically patriotic after dinner, and talk to travellers at table about “our own country,” and the “no wish to see foreign lands until they know their own.”

Nor do we overmuch like the young ones—in addition to a rooted hatred to gents in general—who catch up the same idea second-hand, and cling to it as they know they would do to the side of the steamer, when they are pretending to look after some creature that was following on their lee, but literally concealing their discomfort; who, when a guest says he has crossed the St. Gothard, exclaim, “Ah, but you should see Wales!” and who, when you mention the rocks of Meillerie, exclaim, “Oh! but did you ever go to Hastings?” There are hundreds of these individuals who, having walked up to the water spout at the end of Shanklin Chine, will sneer at all you can humbly venture to say about Interlachen or Aosta. And when those who ought to be good, honest persons, descant upon “the beauties of our own land, if people would but look after them,” we get somewhat angry. Not that we deny the glories of an English landscape—Heaven forbid we ever should!—if there was only the afternoon sunlit glade upon which the curtain rises for the romance of “Ivanhoe” left in our country to keep up the character for sylvan beauty; but these remarks are always made in depreciation of some foreign spot the speaker has never visited. We would, on such occasions, always provide him with a handbook, and a private set of memoranda to boot, of the choicest hotels and least deceptive *vetturini* on the high roads of Europe, that they might go forthwith and be undeceived. The observation that we so often hear made, of “England being the place for everything, after all,” is, as regards travelling, as deceptive as the absurd one that our school-days are our happiest—at least, we judge by our own—and we suppose that the discipline of Merchant Taylors’ may be considered a fair type of the unmeaning severity

with which boys are treated at public schools, the unjust torture which is felt at the time, and, sometimes, dispassionately recollected.

For all such notions are conventional; and conventionality is the log that old slow-coaches lay across the railway upon which the train of social improvement is to run, with first, second, and even third-class passengers. But many things hitherto considered unimpeachable—that is to say, conventionally so—are, we rejoice to say, finding their level. Dreary five-act comedies, which we know of as “standard” from the play-bills, as we know of something else of the same name in Cornhill from the mile-stones; dismal dinner parties, the battles of which are desperately fought with heavy silver spoons, different champagne-glasses to any one ever saw before, new methods of drinking wine, and wine-coolers in which bottles are stuck without an atom of ice, but merely put there because the coolers are silver; the notion with some men that a cigar must be smoked after breakfast or during billiards, if they would have their lives worth a day’s purchase; putting different trousers on on Sundays; declaring that you derive more pleasure from the Ancient Concerts, or listening to “Septettes” in ever so many flats, played to many more, than from Bellini or Auber: all these things—very slowly, but surely—are disappearing; and we hope soon to number also amongst them the frequenters of English watering-places.

We do not say the places themselves, but their *habitués* for with these latter lies the fault of making them so dreary as they are. Let us take three resorts, by way of example, as typical of what we wish to explain—Brighton, Ramsgate, and Margate. They are Cockney specimens—*pur sang*—we admit; but, after all, the much-abused and burlesqued epithet pertains to a great deal that is ardently followed and copied amongst those who would be the last to confess it. We might, perhaps, except Margate, on the ground that there is a rampaut, glorious vulgarity about it, which makes it at times marvellously entertaining. There is no aiming in the deportment of the Margate visitors: you may dress as well as you please all day long, and still be allowed to go unnoticed. Nay, if we recollect aright, there was some sylvan retreat within scent of the sea-weed, where you could procure a tea “in a pleasing style of rusticity at eightpence per head,” without being stared at; and if, after the Arcadian meal, you had chosen to dance a fandango amongst the cups and saucers, in the style of the renowned Baron of Rosherville, and in your own buff slippers, you might have done it, and yet, somehow or another, kept within the pale of Margate society. And so, we will not

further speak of Margate beyond two words of praise—one for its breakfast-bread, and the other for Cobb's ale.

But at Ramsgate all this is very different. The good advice which we once saw pasted under a kitchen clock, of "a time for everything, and everything at its time," might well be engraved at the end of the pier. For there is a proper order of doing things there, whether you like it or no. You must bathe at a certain time, in order to be ready at the proper period to read old novels on the sands, and tumble backwards in your armchairs, or have your shoes—they don't like slippers at Ramsgate—filled with specimens of the aforesaid sands, by the ceaseless toil of the infantile labouring classes with their spades. And when this period has elapsed, woe betide you if you are not ready to go home to lunch! To be seen about at such a period in the streets would be as bad as a West-end man to be detected in London on the Derby Day, the Middle Horticultural Fête, or the beginning of September; it would be taken that you had neither lunch nor lodgings. Having lunched on bread-and-butter—if at a boarding-house, yesterday's joint cold in addition—you dress for the time of going on the pier, and there you must walk with a pertinacity that would tire the Wandering Jew, until it is time "to see the boat come in." The spectacle is not exciting; if you have a friend on board, you recognize and nod to him; and then do not know what else to do but to keep nodding on like a mandarin, and smiling, until he dives after his luggage; if you know nobody, you wait for the grand finale of seeing the passengers come up the steps, and then the show is over. And then comes the sadness of the after-promenade—of meeting those you know, once, and having a small conversation with them on the topics of the day; and then meeting them at the next turn, and saying, "Still here, you see;" and then meeting them coming back, and gasping, "What, not gone yet!" and then not knowing for twelve more turns what the deuce to say, but trying not to see them at all, or smiling blandly sideways as they pass. This goes on until it is time to go home and do nothing for an hour before dinner, literally from having nothing to do; and then you dine. If you are in lodgings, a desolate chop from a sheep who may have been fed on shrimps, or anything else that came handy; or a melancholy fowl who may have been brought up upon those marine plants you pop with your fingers, and so inflated rather than fattened, is your meal. If at a boarding-house, you meet those wonderful old ladies one never encounters anywhere else; who, when they have said, "Have you been out to-day, Miss Pippy?" to the very person they met on the pier, think that the dinner-conversation

is established. And to see them squabble afterwards at cards : that certainly, for a little time, is amusing. Then comes the library—the time for that is nine; the “chances”—well may they be termed so—for the six-shilling ticket; the watch, or work-box, or caddy, that is to form the grand sweepstakes; the same people you have seen in the morning, noon, and night, whom, if you do not know, you are bound to look at disdainfully. This, a little after ten, concludes the day, and has only one good point—you may win a ticket and that is a safe employment for two hours the next morning in selecting out its value from the mass of purses, pomatum, bandoline, mats, and chimney ornaments, that confound you. In this respect, let us award all praise to Mr. Sackett and Mr. Fuller for their oft-tried patience, their courtesies, and wish to oblige.

The same remarks, with little variation, apply to Brighton. But here less is aimed at; it is Regent Street planted quite at its case upon the cliffs. You know all the faces and equipages you meet, and you meet them as a matter of course. Sensible people do not go there for relaxation, but as a conventional duty they owe to society: the weak-minded believe that it is pure tranquil enjoyment. Look upon Brighton as a bright amphibious resuscitation of the London season, and it is glorious; talk of it as a sea-side resort for letting down the tightly drawn strings of your occupied life, and the failure is painful. If you “went in” for comfort and carelessness, you would soon find out your mistake. In a shooting-jacket, a ballet-girl shirt (or a quieter pattern if you choose), and a loose single-tied Joinville, you would directly be taught to shrink from the noon sun like a convolvulus. An Ojibbeway would not attract more attention. You might as well, being grown up, ride from Norfolk Square to the Albion Hotel in a goat-chaise.

In contradistinction to all this imaginary enjoyment, let us take the pleasant, careless Boulogne. It has been customary to deride this keyhole to the Continent; to joke about the mobs who fly there, like the ships, for a harbour of refuge; to allude to “stags” and sharpers, and broken incomes—in fact, to throw every possible slur upon it and its inhabitants. And yet there is no place in the world where really pleasant relaxation can be so readily procured, and at such a cheap rate. You will be told by its enemies that Boulogne is now quite an English town. Don’t believe them. What is there English in its gay, lively port, and lines of smart hotels—its thoroughly continental Rue Neuve Chaussée and *moyen-âge* Upper Town—its *poissarde* population, with their short red petticoats and naked legs, or blue stockings

—its hundreds of glittering white caps in the *Place* on market-day? Walk a mile away from it in any direction—towards Wimereaux, Wimille, or Portel—and you will see as much of France as though you had been right across it from Boulogne to Besançon. Where will you show us such a glorious stroll as that along the cliffs to Ambleteuse, with the sea and the picturesque rocks and martello towers so far below you, and literally in sight of home all the way, if the day be but moderately clear?

You need not make yourself smart to go on the pier at Boulogne; you might wander about dressed in the popular costume of Robinson Crusoe all day, if you pleased, and no one would turn his head to look after you; and if there is no better amusement than to watch and hear the small impish children play marbles, and squabble in French, why that is something. But seeing the boat come in is here something worth waiting for. It is a glorious sight to watch her, if the wind is strong, and the tide somewhat low, rolling and plunging over the bar; and the debarkation of the passengers is as good as a farce, especially if there are two or three undecided in their minds as to their abode, for then they are sure to go to all manner of hotels at once, so urgently do the touters urge the claims of their various establishments.

There is no *ennui* at Boulogne, because there is no conventional observance of rules for deportment. Everybody does what he likes; not what he thinks he ought to like. And, if you wish it, there is a charming private society. In fact, Boulogne is fining down to exceeding respectability; for it has become a trifle too expensive for the outlawed tribes, and they have emigrated, many, we believe, to Calais. It is still much cheaper than England, even to casual visitors, the ordinary expenses of staying there being, compared with the resorts above alluded to, as two to three. The pleasant excitement of a trip thither lasts to the very return; for are you not in duty bound to smuggle *cau-de-Cologne*, gloves, embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs, and trifling jewellery? It is true, to be sure, you may get everything at the same rate in the Lowther Arcade; but that is a very dull way of procuring them. Every contraband article becomes an object of interest, far more valuable than the unmeaning “trifle from” any of the home watering-places we have before alluded to.

Newspaper statistics show you, from time to time, the numbers who pass from Folkestone to Boulogne, compared with the last year. Increase the proportion every season, and you will not repent of having done so.

A FRENCH SCHOOL.

THE continual minor annoyances and ludicrous mistakes to which our knowledge of school French perpetually subjected us, induced us to think about some means of acquiring the language, not as we learn it in England, but as they speak it in France. We applied to several friends, touching the best means of attaining this end, and everybody said, "Go into a school for a short time; it is your only way." Thinking of the old adage, which teaches us what every one says must be right, we accordingly made up our minds to become a schoolboy once more, and started one morning in quest of an "*institution*" likely to suit our purpose. We called at several, but none had the least idea of what a parlour-boarder meant, at least in our sense of the word; and after splitting our boots to pieces in running up and down the Rue d'Enfer (whose miserably un-paved state entirely contradicts the statement that the "*descensus Averni*" is so easy, and shows Virgil had not Paris in his eye when he wrote the *Æneid*), we at length settled with one in the Faubourg St. Jacques, where we stipulated to have a bedroom to ourselves, to dine with the principal, and to be instructed in the French language for one hundred francs per month. Now, we had three reasons for going here. Firstly, it was cheap; secondly, it was near the Barrière Mont-Parnasse, to whose amusement on fête days we had a great predilection; and lastly (we blush to own our cowardice), the *élèves* were all "small boys" whom we could thrash into subjection if they were impudent, or halloo'd after us "*Rosbif Anglais*," "*God-dem*," or any other entertaining polyglot witticisms that the said "small boys" of Paris, there called *gamins*, were apt to indulge in at our expense.

It was a wet, dirty day, in the beginning of November, that we left our lodging at the Hôtel Corneille, Place de l'Odéon, and hiring a porter at the corner of the Rue Racine, paddled up the never-ending, and always dirty, Rue St. Jacques to our new abode. On arriving, we entered the great gates, with which all French schools are embellished, and immediately carried our effects to our bedroom, which was a closet with a tiled floor, about eight feet square, and whose sole furniture was comprised in a little wooden bedstead without curtains, a deal chair, and a corresponding table,

on which was a pie-dish to wash in, and a pint white jug for water. Had we been astronomers, the room would have had many advantages, since it was ingeniously lighted by a window in the ceiling, which, in fine weather, illumined our chamber very well, but in the event of a heavy fall of snow, left us nearly in total darkness. It was late in the evening when we arrived, so we went to bed at once, supplying the want of sufficient bed-furniture by an English great-coat spread over the counterpane, and a carpet-bag, emptied of its contents, made a sort of mat to lay on the ground and stand upon while we undressed.

Long before daylight the next morning we were aroused from our slumbers by a bell ringing to summon the poor devils of *élèves* to the commencement of their studies. We heard much yawning and scrambling after clothes, and then a silent and measured step as the usher assembled them, two and two, to march down stairs to school. About seven, the cook of the establishment—a dirty fellow, in a dirtier white nightcap—brought us a cup of milk and a piece of bread, which we were informed was to be our *first* breakfast; the other was to be at half-past eleven. Unfortunately for us, we always had a great aversion to bread-and-milk; we think it is neither one thing nor the other, and appears to hold an intermediate rank between tea and water. Although we remembered in our infancy to have possessed a book of nursery rhymes, written by some anonymous poet of the dark ages of infantile literature, where there was a picture of a little child, with very curly hair, dragging a respectable female, who looked something between a Sunday-school teacher and a barmaid, towards a cow feeding in a romantic meadow; and, moreover, some lines, which commenced, as far as our memory serves us:

Thank you, pretty cow, that made
Pleasant milk to soak my bread;

and followed by some well-founded cautions not to chew hemlock and other rank weeds; still, we repeat, in spite of all these associations, we do not like bread-and-milk. Accordingly, when we found this was all we were to be allowed before noon, we were out of temper, and getting up very cross, we sauntered down into the playground to inspect our new residence.

The reader must imagine a large court, enclosed on three sides by buildings and walls, and on the fourth by some palings communicating with the garden. The edifices on the right hand were divided into numerous little cells, each having a door, and those were dignified by titles placed over the said doors. The first was called "*Salle de Musique*," and, in consequence, was fitted up

with a cistern and leaden trough, where the *élèves* performed their morning ablutions, when there happened to be any water. Next to this was the "*Salle de Dessin*," or drawing academy; and some empty easels, with a very rickety form or two, showed a great deal went on there. Then came the "*Classe*," or school-room, where the *élèves* studied under the surveillance of two ushers, who ordained a rigid silence amongst their pupils, save and except such times as the said ushers were on duty as national guards. On the other side the court was the dwelling-house and bedrooms, with the "*Réfectoire*" of the pupils, where they fed; and in the middle of the playground, which, from having two trees in it, was denominated the "*Parc*," were divers gymnastic poles and bars, and a deep well, which supplied the establishment with water, when anybody was at leisure to wind it up—an operation of half an hour.

We were tolerably hungry at eleven o'clock, and were not sorry to hear the bell for the boys' breakfast, as we knew ours came after. The pupils silently marched two and two into their room, and took their places at two long tables, where each boy had a fork, cup, and napkin laid for him; tablecloths and knives were unknown. An allowance of *potage*, seemingly composed of cabbage-water and bits of bread, was first served out to each; after that, they had some *vin ordinaire* and water, but such wine—the only thing we could compare it to was ink and small beer mixed together—and when this was well diluted with water, we could imagine how delicious it was. A course of boiled spinach came next, and the breakfast concluded by a dab of currant-jam being distributed to each, which was eaten with their bread, of which, however, there was an unlimited supply. This meal was repeated at five o'clock, with such agreeable variations as the taste of the cook directed; but beyond small pieces of hard boiled beef, and little bits of calf's liver, we did not see much meat. Potato salads, cold artichokes, and boiled lentils, appeared to be the staple articles of refreshment. The meals which we partook with the master and his family were about the same standard, except that the wine was superior, and some *côtelettes* of mutton and veal were occasionally displayed. The *élèves* themselves had none of the spirit of English schoolboys, and, indeed, it was not to be wondered at. We could not help often contrasting the washy mess they were eating to the wholesome roast and boiled joints of our schools. They appeared to have no regular games or toys of their own, and all their play-time was spent in running after one another, with no other end that we could perceive but to warm themselves; for although the weather was desperately cold, there

were no fires, or even fireplaces, in several of the rooms. They never inflicted corporal punishment, but offenders were ordered to stand against a particular tree for half an hour, or be deprived of a dish at dinner. We thought it would have had a better effect to thrash them well, and feed them well.

As we may imagine, from their early rising, they were generally pretty well fatigued at night, and they were always in a deep sleep when we went to bed. As the way to our chamber lay through that of the *élèves*, we had frequent opportunities of inspecting it. It was a large bare room, with the beds arranged round it, and down the middle, like Roux's ward at the Hôtel-Dieu, only the beds had no curtains. Some of the boys had little round mats by the beds to stand upon, but the majority, who could not afford to *hire* these luxuries of the master of the school, had the gratification of planting their naked feet on a tiled floor every morning. A dim and solitary lamp burnt all night in the chamber, barely lighting its extreme ends; not an article of furniture but the beds themselves, and one chair for the usher, was in the room, and the windows all closed with that unattractive irreconcilability which is only known to the windows of the Continent.

We contrived to get through a month at our *institution*, and then we left. We had, it is true, picked up a good deal of French, but in point of expense it had not saved us much, for—the truth must out—we never got enough to eat, and, in consequence, generally dined again at the nearest *restaurant*; nay, more than once, we detected ourselves eating broiled herrings at a wine-shop outside the Barrière d'Areueil.

AN OLD SWISS TRAVELLER.

A TRAVELLER must have taken very high ground a few hundred years ago. Scarcely any place had been visited, and very few had been described; so that a tourist could publish what marvels he pleased, without much fear of contradiction, in the next edition of "Murray's Hand-book." When the ingenious American show-man of modern times painted his ten-mile long panorama of some mighty and unexplored river, and, on being asked whether he had been there, replied, "No—nor more had anybody else, which was his great advantage, because nobody could tell whether he was right or wrong," he reflected to some extent the spirit of the old travellers. It was not necessary to go far away from one's home to seek for marvels, or to become a "lion," in the sixteenth century. And indeed, before that, Marco Polo and John Mandeville, and the early adventurers who so excited Columbus with their mysterious islands in terrible and distant oceans; and their wondrous tales of Cipango, and St. Brandard, and Atlantis, might have created the same sensation without leaving their country to judge from the credit and renown attached to other chroniclers whilst the heavy fogs of credulity and ignorance hung over Europe.

We have been led into these considerations through lighting on an old book of travels, purporting to be a description of a part of Switzerland, and published at Lucerne in the year 1645. Its author, Jean Leopold Cysat, was a native of that city; and his book presents a quaint evidence of the state of the natural sciences and credulity of the people at that epoch. His "travels" were not very extensive; they were principally confined to what would now be termed an "excursion" round the Lake of Lucerne, about which the citizens knew absolutely nothing. The little steamer that leaves Lucerne twice a day for Fluelyn, which it reaches in an hour or two, runs over the extent of Cysat's wanderings. We gain in time, but we certainly lose in marvels, for we see nothing like the old traveller saw; and this with every intention to make use of our eyes. We do not remember much beyond the Righi visitors getting in at Weggis, and the meadow of Grüttli, and Tell's Chapel. This latter spot did not much interest Master Cysat. His belief in the pippin-splitting patriot was evidently

small. The acorn of tradition had not grown up into the oak-tree of fact, nurtured by the sunny holiday credulity of Cockney tourists.

After having enlarged upon the beauties of the lake, our good traveller describes minutely the wonderful fish found in it. Any one of these, hung in the shop of a West-end fishmonger during the season, would have collected an impenetrable crowd. Amongst them was one with four legs and a frog's head. He also saw carp with humps on their backs like dromedaries, and others with faces like those of cats. Many had stones in their heads, which served as remedies against several disorders; and, for fear that we should doubt this, he gravely tells us that in 1642 he found one of these stones in a crayfish caught in the Lake of Sempach, and that the likeness of our Saviour was engraven upon it. He goes on to say that some of the fish in the Lake of Lucerne are so large that they run out and swallow the cattle when they come to drink; and in one of these fish he found a man's hand with two gold rings on it. We might conclude this to have been an alligator, only our author expressly states that it had neither scales nor teeth, and that it must have been a whale, which had mounted the Rhine, the Aar, and the Reuss, to gain the lake! Its flesh was rather nasty, but possessed great virtues. It cleared the voice of those who tasted it, and cured sciatica. We have fished for hours in the Lake of Lucerne, but never yet chanced to hook such a marvel.

The newspaper paragraphist's last resource, a "shower of frogs," would not have astonished the good Cysat. Near Mussegg he was out in a heavy rain of them. They fell all about him and on his hat in incredible quantities. He says they appeared young, but were very thin; and that those which fell on the road were killed, but those tumbling on the grass hopped away in fine style. He also saw several dragons; but he is puzzled whether to class them as birds, fish, or quadrupeds. One started from the Righi and flew away towards Mount Pilatus, so frightening a peasant at work in the fields that he fainted, but on recovering found a precious stone near him as large as a goose's egg, which the dragon had dropped, and which subsequently cured, in an astonishing manner, many stout disorders, and at last appears to have involved the whole population in a lawsuit as to its possession.

We do not invest the Righi with much supernatural romance just at present. Fairies cannot abide hotels, and they hate the clatter of knives and forks, and the Anglo-French of wrangling travellers, and the popping of corks from bottles of champagne

and *limonade gazeuze*. Neither could they pursue their moon-light dances on the summit without the fear of being disturbed long before daybreak by the appearance of some cager tourist, wrapped up in his own counterpane, freshly crept out of his bedroom to see if it was time for the sun to rise. But it seems there is, or was, a great deal to see on the Righi beyond the sunrise, the view from the Kulm and Staffael, and the Fall of the Rossberg. When Master Cysat went up he was shown several very curious grottos, one of which was inhabited by dwarfs of the mountains (*Bergmännlein*); "but this," he says, in a most Herodotus-like spirit of straightforward candour, "I must say that I was but told: let them believe it who may." Subsequently he was shown a lake, at the bottom of which the inhabitants of the district occasionally saw large herds of pigs, which turned over suddenly on their backs when looked at; and on an adjacent peak, an ecclesiastic of high repute told him that he had seen some fragments of a vast ship, which he believes must have rested there since the Deluge. To back up this story, he quotes a writer who declared that in a mine at Berne, three hundred feet under ground, he had found a ship, with the bodies of forty men on board, together with anchors and rigging. And, continuing his route, he mentions a lake of a marvellous nature. When any one stands on its bank, and shouts three times, the water commences to boil over with such violence that the intruder has scarcely time to get out of the way, and, without fail, always dies within the year. Master Cysat appears rather incredulous on this point. He did not test it himself, not considering the result in any way satisfactory.

But while Master Cysat thus minutely and carefully gathers the physical wonders of the lake of the Four Cantons, he does not forget the social aspects. Everybody who has been up and down the Righi recollects the sunny little village of Weggis, and its wooden pier, on which it is so pleasant to sit and watch the blue sparkling water, and wait for the St. Gothard steam-boat. Well, one fine Saturday, in the autumn of 1617, it seems that the treasurer of the parish, a thirsty "party," named Fishlien, suddenly recollected that the next day was the *fête* of the local patron, and that a great consumption of meat, wine, liqueurs, and fruit would take place in consequence; and so, careless of dragons, and whales, and other terrors of the lake, he started off in his boat for Lucerne, there to lay in a stock of comestibles. Master Cysat describes these boats as hollowed out of the trunks of trees like the canoes of savages. Our good man arrived at Lucerne without any accident, and made his purchases, paying

especial attention to the choice of the wines; in fact, he was so anxious to select the finest for his patrons, that no thirsty soul with a "tasting order" in the cool cellars of the London Doeks ever discussed so many varieties. At last, having finished everything to his satisfaction, he re-embarked. It was a beautiful evening; the heat of the sun had declined, and a light breeze coming down from Mount Pilatus blew directly across to Weggis. All this was very agreeable; so Fishlicn hoisted a little square sail, and then laid himself comfortably down at the bottom of his boat, and contemplated the stars which began to peep and twinkle through the violet sky. But he soon found that the vapours of the wine he had tasted troubled his observations. The stars danced and whirled round like flies in a ceiling quadrille, and indeed were doubled in number; so that, after a time, murmuring a confused and melancholy convivial song, he shut his eyes, and, leaving to the wind all the task of driving his boat to his native shore, fell fast asleep.

It so chanced that the wind soon fell asleep too. The current of the Reuss was running with its usual rapidity through the lake; and the good man, boat, wine, provisions and all, turned back again towards Lucerne. He darted under the first bridge, and might have been stopped, if, like the Lady of Shalott, when she floated down to the "many-towered Camelot," he had kept on singing. But he was still fast as a church, and he glided on unperceived under the second bridge, and then under the third, all very quietly, until he came to that part of the Reuss where the rapids began. And here his boat was so tossed, and driven, and bumped against the shore, that he was roused from his slumbers, and perceived in his horror that he was shooting along the stream between strange landmarks, and perfectly helpless. At last, after every vain attempt, he contrived to hold on to a bramble, and so pull himself to land. But he had come so far that no assistance was near, and, ultimately, he never got back to Weggis with his meats and drinks until the *fête* was all passed and over. And this being all the story, it is remarkable what pains Master Cysat has taken to chronicle a matter of such great simplicity amidst the other astounding marvels with which his book abounds.

Looking back to the credulous old writer, we almost regret some of his marvels are not yet extant, for the benefit of Swiss travellers, who will romance about his tours. They might there have seen something that would have served them to have talked about on their return home beyond "storms on the Grimsel." We all know a class of young men—they are chiefly budding

barristers—who bore you if you sit next to them at dinner parties with accounts of frightful adventures they encountered in the snow, with ignorant guides, on the most beaten passes of the Cockney Swiss itinerary. You know all the time that these things never happened; that every road, and pass, and *sentier* of the Alps is as secure as Hampstead Heath; that the long-detailed conversation these travellers had with their guides, their determined resolutions, threats, altercations, and triumphs, were vivid inventions, looking to the average French of the Temple; that adventures altogether in travelling have long ceased to be, since the existence of continental railways, circular notes, and “Murray;” that those who go to the Mont de Glace have not been half of the way up Mont Blanc, nor anything approaching to it; and that when the corks of Barclay and Perkins floated on the Lake of Lucerne, and the echoes of Tell’s meadow were called forth by the “Half a turn astarn!” of the steam-boat engineer’s boy, no more adventures would be allowed to run about the dessert. And, therefore, we wish that Cysat’s book would hold good at present, to furnish these chatterers with new themes. Besides, what a draw his Righi dragon would be at the Zoological Gardens; or his large fish in the tank at the Polytechnic Institution! How a family of the mountain dwarfs would put out of joint the noses—as much as they possess—of the Bosjesmen, managed by a ‘cute American! And what a blessing, as soon as Parliament and the elections were over, his shower of frogs would be to the entire newspaper interests of the United Kingdom!

But these things are not. Bradshaw is the great Iconoclast of romantic images, and the dread interior of Africa is now the only spot left for any one to go to who wishes to make an uncontradicted excitement by a book of travels.

MR. LEDBURY REVISITS PARIS,
AND IS
IGNOMINIOUSLY EXPELLED FROM HIS LODGINGS.

WE have lately heard a little news of an old friend, with whom we were once upon terms of considerable intimacy for some time—Mr. Titus Ledbury, formerly of Islington. We should not have intruded this intelligence upon our gentle readers, had we not been frequently asked what had become of him; and as they ever evinced a disposition to receive him courteously, and looked upon him as a simple, kind-hearted creature, who, if he did not create any remarkably out-of-the-way sensation, never, at all events, offended those to whom he was introduced, we make bold once more to bring him into their presence.

The London season was in a confirmed state of rapid decline, so far gone, indeed, that immediate change of air to a more congenial climate was universally agreed upon by everybody. The carriages sensibly diminished in numbers in the parks and at the West-end; opera orders were abundant, and sometimes people got a box who had never been in one before, and displaying their innocence thereof, by buying a bill and hanging it over the edge, pinned to the amber satin, and mistaking Mario for Sims Reeves, and Balfe for Mr. Lumley. The concerts were all over, and the light halls of Willis and Hanover-square, and the dirty—we had well-nigh said “grubby”—room of Her Majesty’s Theatre no longer bottled up well-meaning people, who had been guilty of no offence, and therefore did not deserve such treatment, from noon till dewy eve.

Fashionable entertainments, too, diminished. *Thés dansants* and *déjeûners à pied*—from lack of seats—were no longer chronicled. Stay-at-home unfortunates were promised more grouse by Highland marauders than all the moors could furnish; coloured shirts, of wild and wondrous patterns, hitherto christened “Regatta,” were suddenly converted into “Shooting;” and “Gents’ Once Rounds” retired into private life to make room in the windows for “Balmoral Ties,” as worn by the superior class at Perth, and other game pitches. There were no

more *fêtes champ (aign)êtres*, no more marvellous exhibitions. Indeed, it became a question difficult to answer, where the wonders went to—the mannikins and Bosjesmeu, the oxen, horses, and iceberg dogs—the living statues and waxen celebrities, that collectively drew the shilling from the popular pocket, as the loadstone rock of the “Arabian Nights” whilom did the nails from the argosies that came within the sphere of its attraction.

Whitebait got larger; in fact, it became as difficult to establish the line where the “bait” ended and the bleak began, as to define at which point of the Oregon of the mind instinct merged into reason. There were no longer the rows of “drags” and “traps,” and mail-phaetons, bold barouches, and sly-looking broughams outside the Trafalgar. Mr. Hart breathed again, and Mr. Quartermaine sat down—both for the first time since spring came in with the radishes. Flounders enjoyed their own cold *water souchée* in the river; and ducks to follow, simply followed one another on the tranquil inland waters of Blackheath.

Everything was getting dried up and dusty. Plants outside windows turned brown, and mignonette went very wild, and was not replaced; for the long flower-laden barrows ceased to come round, the people having found out that their contents always died two days after purchase, in spite of every care. Even ladies and gentlemen appeared parched up for want of water and betook themselves accordingly to aquatic districts; and shutters closed, and servants were put upon board wages, and nobody was at home any more for several months.

One fine afternoon, at this season of the year, Mr. Ledbury was sitting on a very high stool at his office, drawing Carlotta Grisi in “Esmeralda” on his blotting-paper, from the pattern of his shirt, on which she was reproduced many times in a chocolate tint, together with various other Terpsichorean planets, and humming an appropriate air for the edification of Mr. Biggs, the clerk, who had never been to the opera but once—and then he was not admitted, from appearing in nankeen trousers, and a light pepper-and-salt tweed—when there was a ring at the bell. Mr. Ledbury pulled a string which opened a door, and who should come in but his friend and brother-in-law, Jack Johnson.

“Hollo, Jack!” said Mr. Ledbury, stopping short in the middle of the “Truandaise;” “how d’ye do, old fellow?”

“How are you, Leddy? I’m all right, always. Isn’t it hot?”

And in proof that he thought it was, Jack took off his hat,

inverted it, spun it in the air, and then let it twirl, as he caught it on the point of his forefinger, to the great delight of Mr. Biggs, who always looked upon Jack as a marvellous person, and smiled humbly at everything he did.

"That's a wonderful shirt you've got on, Mr. Biggs," said Jack; "stunning!"

"I'm glad you like it, sir," said Mr. Biggs. "It has been much admired at Walworth."

"It is very appropriate," said Jack. "It looks as if you had ruled it yourself with red ink, and then ornamented the lines with wafers. It is exceedingly neat without being gaudy."

Mr. Ledbury laughed.

"Mr. Biggs," continued Jack, "what do you drink this hot weather?"

"I think shandy-gaff is the most pleasant beverage," replied the clerk, mildly.

"Shandy how much?" inquired Jack.

"It is ginger-beer and ale," said Mr. Ledbury. "We will try some now. Mr. Biggs, bring me the cellar."

Whereon Mr. Biggs reached down a large tin-box, labelled "TITLE DEEDS," and brought it to Mr. Ledbury, who found some ginger-beer in it, which he marshalled upon the desk.

"Now, Mr. Biggs," said Jack, with mock politeness, "I think we must presume upon your acknowledged affability to request you will procure us some ale. Take that blue bag, and go and get it."

"The vehicle was an odd one; but Mr. Biggs appeared to understand the order, and left the office.

"How's Emma, though?" asked Mr. Ledbury, inquiring after his sister, as if he felt he ought to have done so before.

"Very well," answered Jack; "and the baby's very great. I think I shall make something of him. He takes a sight at the nurse capitally. There's a deal of fun in him, for he's always laughing. Only sometimes we can't make out his jokes. However, never mind baby just now. I've got something in store for you. What do you think of a rush over to Paris?"

"You don't mean that?" said Mr. Ledbury, in a doubt of delight. "Come now, Jack; no nonsense."

"On my honour, I'm in earnest, Leddy. If you like to come, as before, all expenses will be paid. It's about the Great Northern Railway. I must be back within a week, but you can stay on if you like. Will you go?"

"Rather, Jack," replied his friend. "The governor promised me a holiday. I'm game!"

"The Brighton, Dieppe, and Rouen's the mark," said Jack, "and we will be off to-morrow morning."

Mr. Biggs here returned with the blue bag, from which he produced a bottle of Scotch ale; and this being turned into a wash-hand jug, with an equal quantity of ginger-beer, Jack wrote "Gone on 'Change—back in half an hour," on a slip of paper, and wafered it on the office door, which he closed inside.

And then they sat and discussed the new beverage along with Mr. Biggs, who, in his humility, from lack of tumblers, could scarcely be kept from drinking out of a new inkstand. But this the others would not hear of, so he was supplied with a hyacinth-glass, in which a bulb had been all the year getting to the similitude of a spring onion, and there stopped; and this did very well.

"Well, Mr. Biggs," said Jack, "what do you think of the railways?"

"They are the great arteries of mercantile and social life, sir, and place the knowledge gained by travel within the grasp of the poor man," said Mr. Biggs, humbly, quoting from some work for "The People," that he had read in a coffee-shop.

"Quite right, Mr. Biggs," said Jack, "and beautifully expressed. Here's 'May time never shut off your steam until you get to the extension terminus.' Come, Leddy; you must drink that."

"I beg your pardon, Jack," said Mr. Ledbury, whose imagination had already carried him to the Boulevards. "Mr. Biggs, may time never cut off your terminus—who is it, Jack? I didn't hear."

"Never mind," said Jack, and he continued: "Had you any shares in the railways, Mr. Biggs?"

"None, sir," said the clerk; "I am a poor man."

"Then you're a lucky fellow, if you knew it," said Jack. "The poor man never had so many friends as at present. I know a fellow—jolly chap he is, too—who writes for newspapers and periodicals; knows what life is; never goes to bed, and lives upon pale ale and boiled bones."

"How very odd!" said Mr. Ledbury. "I thought there had been a great row lately about eating bones."

"Ah, they were raw," said Jack. "Well, this fellow took a wonderful start, lately; set up a dog-cart, and lived in a house all to himself. So I asked him how he did it. 'Why,' he said, 'it's all the poor man; I'm sure I ought to be his friend, for his is the only dodge in writing that pays well, now. I don't know whether it does *him* much good, for pens and ink are not

very nourishing; and that's all it ends in. But it's capital for us!"

Mr. Ledbury rather shook his head at this, for he believed in philanthropy and virtuous indignation; and Mr. Biggs was undecided how to look, until Jack plunged him into still deeper confusion by asking him to favour them with some popular ballad. Upon which Mr. Biggs said he would with pleasure, if he could, but he never knew one; whereon Mr. Ledbury pleasantly reproved him, and revealed how Mr. Biggs had told an untruth; and how he had one day heard him, from the back office, singing the foreign air of "Old Dan Tucker," and dancing a strange measure, as he tried to imitate the bones accompaniment with the paper-knife and some sticks of sealing-wax, until he broke the latter in his enthusiasm. Hereat Mr. Biggs blushed fuchsia, and said, "Oh, Mr. Titus—really!" and then Mr. Ledbury told him to put words to the "Post-horn Hymn," which a Genoese organist, of slow temperament, was grinding below the window, in a dilatory manner, that would have driven Arban mad had he heard it. But, finding that Mr. Biggs was too nervous to sing himself, they went on talking, until Mr. Ledbury, under the influence of ale, treated Mr. Biggs to a French song—which, as far as Mr. Biggs was concerned, might have been double Sanscrit, or provincial Chiuese, both of which dialects are somewhat difficult to acquire fluently. But Mr. Biggs thought it so good, that Mr. Ledbury's desire to amuse increased: and he next showed the placid clerk how the students danced at the Chaumière, and at what part they were turned out by the *Garde Municipale*, concluding by performing a *galop* with the invoice-book, until Jack joined him, and the *divertissement* concluded with a *pas de deux* of such originality, that Mr. Biggs clapped his hands quite deliriously, and declared he had never seen anything half so good—no, not at the Bower, nor any other fashionable place of entertainment. And as old Mr. Ledbury was out of town for the day, their rapid act of merriment was only brought to a close by Titus dancing over his spectacles, and the Exchange clock striking five with an intensity that nearly knocked over the grasshopper from his ticklish pinnacle.

It did not take Mr. Ledbury long to make up his mind to go with Jack and pack up his wardrobe. He longed to let his mustachios grow, but all the efforts he had made for years to get them to shoot had been failures; and the same with regard to his whiskers. None of the wonderful things which the young men who cut his hair always recommended, answered; his consumption of Circassian Cream must have affected in no small

degree the trade of the Black Sea and the regions of the Caucasus; but still his face was smooth. And once, when he had been rash enough to buy a pair of false mustachios, that were fixed with a spring to his nostrils, he brought on such a wonderful fit of sneezing, that he had well-nigh blown all his brains out by the same route as those of the Egyptian mummies are reported, by cunning men who delight in unrolling those bales of pitchy mortality, to have left their tenement. So that he gave up the notion, fondly as he clung to it, and determined upon trusting, as heretofore, to his elegant manners and knowledge of foreign style generally, to be considered a true Parisian.

Little occurred worthy of especial notice on the road to Paris. For steam-boat journeys across the Channel were then all alike; and when you knew one *conducteur* of a diligence, you were upon terms of perfect intimacy with all, all over France; nor was there any great diversity in the fashion of diligences. The boiled mutton and French-beans skated about the chief-cabin table as usual, when the able-bodied assembled to dine, half-way between the Chain Pier and Dieppe quais; the same lady of a certain age lay helpless on deck, with her head on a carpet-bag, and her feet in an old cloak; and now and then requested to be thrown overboard without further delay, and put out of her misery at once, as formerly. There were, apparently, the very same soldiers and *douaniers* on the pier that Titus knew at Boulogne; and the same incomprehensible soup, made of cheese, lamp-oil, and hot water, shaken up together, awaited them; with the identical white crockery, blunt knives, and wooden cruet-frames in the *salle à manger* of the ubiquitous Hôtel "d'Angleterre," or "de Londres," or "de l'Europe," or whatever it was; but it was sure to be one of these.

Nor did Mr. Ledbury think otherwise than that he had slept on the same walnut-tree bedstead, and washed in the same white pic-dish, and used the same scanty towels, that look as if they were the sheets cut into little pieces a hundred times before. And as for the diligence, next morning, somehow or other it must have been the very one that first took him from Boulogne to Paris. There were beggars too, with all of whom he was upon terms of the greatest familiarity; and the same horses whinnied and fought, and rattled the bits of jack-chain and remnants of box-cord that formed the harness, and were sworn at with precisely the same oaths by the postillion.

At Rouen, however, there was a little change, for now there was a railway. But they did not leave the diligence, for all that; for the body of the carriage was taken off its wheels, and

hoisted up into the air, passengers, luggage, and all, by the ornithological and crustaceous union of a crane and a crab, as if it had been merely a sack of wool, and then lowered down upon the truck.

There was much to amuse at this part of the journey, more especially as regarded a very fussy lady, who complained that riding sideways in the *intérieur* made her sick, and so, with much labour, for she was heavily fashioned, was hoisted, pushed, and guided into the *banquette*. When she got there, she hoped "she was not disturbing the gents;" and then, not being in any way proud, entered into conversation, and said she was going to join Lord Somebody's family at Paris, and that her name was Mrs. Mills, and that she had been sent for from England to superintend the establishment—in other words, as Jack soon found out, to be a housekeeper. She had evidently enjoyed her dinner, and talked considerably in consequence.

"Ah!" she said, as soon as they had packed her safely away, "this is better. But nothing should have made me come, if I'd know'd it."

"Haven't you had a pleasant journey, ma'am?" asked Jack.

"Pleasant indeed, sir! Who could expect it in foreign parts? I'm sure I thought I should have died, all the way from Brighton, and a little more would have done it. I never hope to see that Chain Pier again. And it's nothing when you do, no more than what Hungerford Bridge would be with Lambeth took clean away.

"We must cultivate her, Leddy," whispered Jack, determining to draw her out; and thus he proceeded:

"You didn't have a pleasant passage then, ma'am?"

"No, sir," said the lady, sharply, as though enraged with Jack for asking. "I was insulted at first starting, by being asked at Brighton if I had a passport. 'No,' said I, 'and I hope I never shall have, for my marriage-certificate is framed and glazed, and I am not afraid to show it to anybody, although now I am a lone woman!' But the chamber-maid—a impudent hussy she was too—made me go to a Mr. Black, where I paid ten shillings for a bit of paper which has bothered me the whole way. Passport, indeed! paugh! What will they want next, I should like to know?"

"Very true, ma'am," observed Jack; "as you properly say, what will they want next?"

"They'd have my bandbox when I landed, if they could, for good," said Mrs. Mills; "for a tall fellow stopped me as I was going ashore. 'And what do you want?' says I. '*Arretay!*'

says he, which I knew by his look meant something bad; and there they rummaged it dreadful, and afterwards I was boxed up in the back of this machine, in a stivy part, just like a slice of omnibus, with foreign gentlemen, who were dressed respectable, but knew no more of English than an unborn babe. At last, I heard my native tongue outside, and I said to the speaker, 'Sir, as you are a Christian, and not a Frenchman, pray ask leave for me to go in front;' and here I am."

The last affirmation was not to be denied, any more than the popular information of "Now we're off!" which everybody feels called upon to say when a train moves, without fear of contradiction. Whereupon Jack went on:

"My friend here," pointing to Mr. Ledbury, "makes precisely the same complaint. A clever young man," whispered Jack to the lady; "his name is Hopley, a cousin of the Maid of Orleans you have heard of."

"I have heard speak of her, but can't say I knew her, sir," said Mrs. Mills. "I saw her statue this morning."

"He came to Rouen to see it also," said Jack. "She was burnt, you know, in the market, after the Battle of Waterloo; a blot upon the Duke of Wellington's name, great as it is—a sad mistake." And Jack shook his head.

"What did you think of the figure, ma'am?" asked Titus, who had heard all this.

"A fine girl, sir; but not so handsome as her effigies at Madame Tussaud's neither."

"You must expect a Maid of Orleans to be plummy," observed Jack, gravely.

Mrs. Mills did not take the pun, but Titus went into a temporary fit of St. Vitus's dance.

"My friend is trying to see what connexion there is between Noah's Ark and Joan of Arc," continued Jack. "What is your opinion of her, Mr. Hopley?"

"She was a strange young woman," said Ledbury, "when she was in service, and dangerous to have a Sunday out, as Susan used to say, although she was always very correct and proper. Go on, Jack," he whispered; "I can't tell such crams: I'm sure to laugh."

"Her head ran too much on soldiers," continued Jack. "She thought more of guns and helmets than brooms and afternoon caps. You can imagine, ma'am, how it astonished a respectable and piously-cheerful family, to find their housemaid learning the sword-exercise in the kitchen. And yet she was the acknowledged heroine of domestic drama."

"I thought such things were never done but at Ashley's," said Mrs. Mills. "I knew a lady there—a real lady she was too, and very good-looking—who played warrior queens, but she was peaceable enough at home, and never wanted to fight six ruffians, or clamber up a blazing fortress on horseback."

At this moment, Mr. Ledbury, who had been looking another way and pretending to blow his nose, and putting on an expression of apoplectic jocular suffering, burst into a fit of laughter; Jack also tittered from sympathy; and Mrs. Mills, who for some little time had mistrusted her companions, muttered something about "behaving as gentlemen," and made allusions to "shop-boys out for the day" (which, considering where they had got to, must have been a pretty long one), and then relapsed into dignified and contemptuous silence, which lasted until they arrived at the Paris *debarcadère*. In a few minutes the diligence was again hoisted on to its carriage, to which the horses were already attached, and they once more clattered down the Rue de Grenelle St. Honoré, into the courtyard of the Messageries. Here they got a *citadine*, and proceeded over the river to the Hôtel de l'Étoile—a cheap students' house on the Quai St. Michel, and on the river boundary of the Quartier Latin, where they intended to stay merely until they hunted up some of their old friends.

Jack was certainly a very jolly married man—one of the best you could encounter in a long day's search—and although he made Ledbury's sister a capital husband, was not at all "slow," and therefore he told Titus he was game for anything that evening; and as it was Thursday, and he thought they might meet some acquaintances of former days, they settled at once to dress themselves, and go up to the Chaumière, determined to make the most of their united stay in Paris. So they made their toilet, and Mr. Ledbury insisted upon having his hair curled *en papillotes*, by the coiffeur in the "Rue de l'École de Médecine," and bought a pair of bright yellow nineteen-sous gloves to make an effect, and then went off, with the greatest reliance upon his personal appearance, towards the Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse.

It was very capital—the walk thither. Nothing seemed much altered. The nursemaids were flirting with the soldiers in the gardens of the Luxembourg, and the old men were still playing bowls by the ground where Ney was executed; and when Mr. Ledbury saw two grisettes in airy *barège* dresses and coquettish little muffin-shaped caps, not made as they used to wear them, but formed something like a low-crowned hat made of lace, with no rim, but large lappets, he was for rushing towards them at once, and engaging them for innumerable dances; only Jack re-

strained him, "for," he said, "we shall be sure presently to meet some old friends, so do not be too excited, Leddy." And this recommendation just came in time, for no sooner did Mr. Ledbury hear the distant band over the wall, than he performed a *pas seul* upon the boulevards from very joyousness of heart, no less than to distinguish himself in the eyes of the grisettes just named, and to show them that he was quite at home in Paris—rather! And this was not concluded until he had danced against a gendarme and a *marchand de coco*, whose tin temple of beverage he almost knocked over.

They went into the gardens, and, as Jack had said, soon met some old friends. Jules was there, and Henri—the two young artists, and they pointed out Eulalie, and Clara, and Sophie, and Héloïse, and all sorts of pretty little faces, that looked a few years younger, if anything; and when they recognized Ledbury and Jack, there was such a shout, and such shaking of hands, and, as regarded the young grisettes, such going through other ceremonies of recognition, which popular maxims say it is not right to tell of, as was delightful to behold. It was lucky for Jack that Aimée was not there—very lucky—for Jack was married, and you know it would have been so awkward, the meeting! And then they all got round a table and ordered expensive things—punch and champagne even—and talked, and laughed, and kicked up such a famous row, that the authorities had well-nigh interfered; and Clara, who was a fair-haired, blue-eyed, rosy-mouthed little Belgian, thought Mr. Ledbury so funny, and Mr. Ledbury was so flattered thereby, that he quite lost his head, and proposed the health of Belgium generally, and volunteered to sing, "She wore a wreath of roses," in which he was always very great, and which he now began, but was prevented from finishing by Jack voting for a polka. And here it was that Mr. Ledbury did indeed shine. His dancing was the admiration of the whole party, and his elegant attitudes, no less than his good-tempered face, attracted all eyes. And when he had finished, and led his panting, breathless partner from the enclosure, they gave him a round of applause; whereon, with much grace, he drank to them in a small tumbler of champagne, and by this time he was ready for anything.

The *Jeu de Bague*—a game like the roundabouts at our fairs—was in full swing, and Titus proposed that they should have a game between the dances.

"I will show these Frenchmen what a Briton can do, Jack, when he pleases," he said.

"Keep all right, Leddy," said Jack, "or, perhaps, they will

show you what they can do in return. Remember former scrapes."

"It's all right, Jack," said Titus; "now see them look at me."

There were two horses and two chairs on the roundabout; and the game consisted in the players being furnished with little spears like knife-sharpeners, and trying to take off small rings from a hook on which they were hung—a modification of the old tilting at the ring. Mr. Ledbury got on one of the horses, which he sat gallantly, to show the Parisians he was a sportsman; and Clara occupied one of the chairs; the two other places were taken by Jack and one of the grisettes, and off they went.

For the first few rounds Mr. Ledbury simply smiled at the company, politely bowing to them every time he came near them, like the little man at the evening party on the top of the organ; and then he kissed his hand, and waved his pocket-handkerchief, and, finally, with a flourish of his spear, began to play, imitating martial music on a cornet. By some good luck or other he carried off a ring or two, at which the students and grisettes who were looking on cheered. This was quite enough to drive him into any act of wildness, and, after a few more turns, which did not improve his steadiness, coming on the champagne, he formed a project of unequalled boldness. One of the *garde* was standing near the game, looking with folded arms and frowning brow upon the players. As Titus came near him he seized his helmet, and lifted it forcibly from his head, directly afterwards putting it upon his own, to the intense astonishment of the soldier.

Any insult offered to the authorities is sure to be hailed with acclamation by the frequenters of the *Chaumière*, and a roar of delight burst forth. At this Mr. Ledbury was so excited, that by some marvellous exertion he contrived to stand up in his stirrups, and would have got upon the horse itself, to have thrown himself into a *tableau*, had not the enraged functionary stopped the machine and pulled the offender from his charger. The crowd pressed round, and tried to hustle him away by pushing the grisettes all in a heap against the guard, knowing that he would not attack them. Jack had sprung from his perch like lightning, and seeing their object, caught Ledbury by the collar, and dragged him actually through a party of gendarmes who were coming to the scene of the row. Then lugging him into one of the bosquets, where the obscurity protected them, he said:

"Keep still, Leddy. How could you be such an ass?"

"I'll show them what an Englishman dares to do, Jack," said Titus quite bewildered; and he began to sing—

"For England, home, and beauty."

"England, home, and fiddlesticks," said Jack. Hold your tongue, do, or they'll have you now. Sit down."

And, knowing that when Mr. Ledbury got into these heroics he was heedless of everything, Jack seized him by the throat and fairly choked him down behind one of the benches, in spite of all his declarations that he would go and see fair play, and not allow friends he respected to be ill-treated on his account.

And here, for a few minutes, Mr. Ledbury remained, in great excitement and indignation.

It was very fortunate for Mr. Ledbury that Jack had some command over him, for his ambition at all times to distinguish himself was so great, more especially in the presence of the fair sex, that there is no telling to what lengths he might have been led in the way of display had it not been for his friend's firm clutch. His susceptibility was not an interested feeling. So long as he knew that two bright eyes, set in a pretty face, were watching him—whether they belonged to a duchess or a grisette was perfectly immaterial—they were quite sufficient to inspire him to brave the Garde Municipale, or storm the Tuileries, or do any other madcap freak that he fancied might have been required of him.

Of course the authorities were put upon the wrong scent; and whilst they marched off to some part of the gardens towards which they were told the perfidious Englishman had retreated, Jack pulled Ledbury from his hiding-place, and prepared to quit the Chaumière. As he left the arbour, Titus said something about the British lion being at bay in his lair, and appeared desirous of realizing the six positions of the Fighting Gladiator; upon which Jack got the two young artists to accompany them, and these three, performing a wild dance as they went through the gate, in the mazes of which they hustled round Mr. Ledbury whenever he attempted to speak, prevented him from addressing the gate-keeper, who thought it was merely a convivial party returning home. Thus they contrived to get him out safely upon the boulevard, along which they proceeded a little way, and then all sat down to rest on the edge of one of the hollows which are dug between the trees, for no other apparent purpose than to form traps for strangers to tumble into.

When they were seated, Mr. Ledbury, who had been performing a forced march, looked round at his companions with a severe

aspect, and then he stared up at the moon, which was shining brightly. The sight of the calm planet appeared to soften his feelings; for his face gradually lost its severity, and he next said, in a plaintive tone, as he waved his head backwards and forwards:

"I am far from home and from everything I love on earth, without friends, and a stranger in a foreign land!"

"Hear, hear!" cried Jack, convivially. "'Off, off!' said the stranger!"

"Jack," said Mr. Ledbury, in reproving accents, "I did not expect this from you, whom I always thought my friend. But no matter—I am used to it. Would I were at home—at my own humble home, on which that same moon is now shining! How have I misspent my time and deceived my kind parents!"

Here Mr. Ledbury wept; he was evidently labouring under some impression that he had committed a series of unpardonable crimes, and was altogether an outcast from decent society.

"Why, Leddy—old brick!—what's the matter?" asked Jack, placing a hand on his shoulder.

"Nothing—nothing, Jack," replied Titus, putting away his friend. "It is long since I have thus wept; not since I was a child—a guileless, sportive thing of four years old—a little, little, little child!"

"Ah!" said Jack, drawing him out, "and you remember—you remember how happy you were when your childhood flitted by, and your little lovers came with lilies and cherries, and all sorts of larks."

"They will never come again," replied Mr. Ledbury. "And where is the little Belgian who polked so well? Has she left me too?"

"Oh," thought Jack, "we shall do now."

So, recollecting that in their rapid act of horsemanship they had forgotten the grisettes in a very ungallant manner, he got Jules and Henri to go back after them. And as soon as they were gone, Mr. Ledbury's excitement arrived at the affectionate stage, and he shook Jack warmly by the hand, and said he was a good fellow, and that they were all good fellows, and knew he'd never behaved well to Jack, nor showed him such attention as he ought to have done; but that was neither here nor there, nor, as Jack observed, anywhere else that he knew of.

However, they got wonderful friends again, and by this time the young artists came back with Clara, and Eulalie, and Héloïse, and, making over the former to the protection of Mr. Ledbury, they started, seven abreast, along the boulevard on their way

home, indulging, as a matter of course, in the right and proper chorus to be sung at such times, which nobody was ever known to go home along the boulevards from the Chaumière without joining in. This is it:

THE STUDENT'S CHAUMIERE SONG.

I.

The win-ter's gone a - way; The Boulevard trees are
wa ving; Gri-settes and stu-dents gay For
Mont Par-nasse are cra - ving. Tou - jours! Tou -
jours! Tou - jours! Now all its joys al
- lure. Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! tra la la la la! Eh!
ioup! ioup! ioup! tra la la la la! Eh!
ioup! ioup! ioup! Tra la la la la. Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! tra
la la la la la la la la la la la la la!

II.

Messieurs les Etudiants

All at the Chaumière now,

To dance the wild *cancan*

Beneath the hand repair now,

*Toujours! toujours! toujours!**Bacchus et "les amours!"**(Chorus.)* Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

III.

The Garde Municipale

Has only to show fight, boys,

We stop our wild cabal,

And then we take a sight, boys,

Toujours! toujours! toujours!

The which we can't endure.

(Chorus.) Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

IV.

At once we follow up

Our studies, love, and folly;

We read, we drink, we sup,

And still are always jolly.

Toujours! toujours! toujours!

Whilst night and day endure.

(Chorus.) Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

V.

Our passions soon are o'er:

We sigh for Héloïse,

Now Clara we adore,

And now we kiss Louise,

Toujours! toujours! toujours!

And all the rest abjure.

(Chorus.) Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

VI.

Here's Julie's sparkling eyes,

Whose every glance expresses,

"Faint heart ne'er won the prize—

I wait for your addresses,"

Toujours! toujours! toujours!

The treasure then secure.

(Chorus.) Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

VII.

Despite the sermons slow,

Of tutor or of father,

The students all days show

They love the Chaumière—rather.

*Toujours! toujours! toujours!*With wine and "*les amours!*"*(Chorus.)* Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

There are no places in the Quartier Latin of Paris to "finish" an evening at. English innovation has kept some of the *cafés* open very late on the northern boulevards; but by eleven o'clock at night this classical region is deserted. And as the young ladies—the daughters of the proprietor—who conjointly kept the lodge

of the Hôtel de l'Etoile du Nord were models of propriety, and did not approve of the visits of any other young ladies to their domicile at any hour, but always received them with an aspect of fearful severity, which the boldest did not like to encounter a second time, Jack and Mr. Ledbury took an affectionate good night of their friends at the door, and especially of the little Belgian, to whom Titus, in his enthusiasm, had been talking Tennyson for the last quarter of an hour instead of singing, and trying to put the good poetry into bad French as he proceeded, to the utter bewilderment of his companion, for even Mr. Ledbury's French was not of the purest.

"Écoutez," said Mr. Ledbury: "La reine du Mai est la plus jolie de tout; elle est la reine du fête, vous savez, comme ça. Je la chanterai." And, stopping his ears to the chorus, he went on:

"LA REINE DU MAI.

Si vous êtes veillante, appelle-moi, ma mère, appelle-moi de bonne heure;
Demain sera de toute l'année le plus fortuné jour;
De toute l'année nouvelle, ma mère, la journée la plus gai,
Car je serai l'Reine du Mai, ma mère! je serai l'Reine du Mai!

N'est ce pas que c'est touchante?"

"Charmanter!" said the little Belgian, in a perfect haze as to its meaning: "bien gentille!"

"I shan't be waking to call you early, Leddy, if you don't come in," observed Jack, just as Mr. Ledbury was beginning another verse.

It was a peculiarity of Mr. Ledbury's nature, that, when he was just at all excited, he always began to talk Tennyson. If young ladies jilted him after supper at parties, he always abused his "cousin Amy" in right good Locksley Hall style, as a relief to his feelings. If he felt slow, he quoted "Mariana;" and when he wanted to create a favourable impression, he whispered the Earring and Necklace song from "The Miller's Daughter" to his partner in the rest of a polka. But Jack, who had heard all these pieces over and over again, did not always enter into his enthusiasm as warmly as he wished, and now even rudely cut him short. So the good-night was repeated—one would fancy it must have been a very agreeable proceeding by the evident general desire to encore it; and then the grisettes were escorted by the artists along the Quai St. Michel. They struck up the chorus again as they left, whilst Mr. Ledbury waved his hand with the air of a *châtelain* of the olden time when a procession left his castle; and the strain awakened the echoes of the old buildings from the Morgue—which was exactly opposite to them—to Notre Dame,

until, as they turned up the Ruc de la Harpe, it stopped suddenly, at the request of a body of the Garde Municipale, who just then came round the corner. And then, as Mr. Ledbury had seen enough of those functionaries for that evening, he retreated indoors, and, taking his candle from the eldest Mademoiselle Petit, followed Jack up to bed. But his cerebral excitement had not yet gone off, and his visions were disturbed. He dreamt that he was a cuirassier, fighting for Belgium and beauty, and then dancing strange Chaumière figures over a body of prostrate gendarmes, being joined by all the lamps and musical instruments in the garden, which appeared to be always rapidly descending before his eyes, without getting any lower. And, indeed, the morning sun came through the quivering leaves of the scarlet-runners that bordered his window, before he sank into a quiet slumber.

Jack's first care was to get the business transacted that he had come about, and this took up a couple of days, which Mr. Ledbury passed chiefly with Jules and Henri in their *atelier* during the morning, getting rid of the evening by treating the little Belgian to unlimited ices at the Café de la Rotonde, and then going to see Déjazet. And he found this life so very pleasant, that, with a little persuasion, he left the Hôtel de l'Etoile, and took what Jack very rudely denominated a first-class cockloft over the studio of his friends. It contained a bed and a chair, and was so limited in its proportions, that the occupier was obliged to sit on the floor to dress, and could not open the door without getting on the bed. But, nevertheless, Mr. Ledbury was exceedingly joyous in it; and would have been more so but for the "lean-to" ceiling, against which he regularly bumped his head every morning.

"I don't think I like this pigeon-house much, Leddy," said Jack, as Titus, in the fulness of his heart, wished his friend to partake of it.

"Oh, it's capital, Jack—ten francs a month—think of that! Such a pure air, too, and such a view!"

"A view—ah! yes, I see," replied Jack, looking towards the panes of glass in the roof, through which alone light was admitted: "capital, if you like astronomy. You can lie in bed and learn the Great Bear famously."

"No, no; look here, Jack," said Mr. Ledbury, anxious to exhibit all the advantages of his new domicile. "You must get on the bed, and then open the skylight, and heave yourself up through it—so. There, now, I can see the telegraphs on St. Sulpice working away like several one-o'clocks. I wonder what they mean: they're very like an F just now: can you tell?"

"That's a comprehensive clue, certainly," said Jack. "But

it's sure to be 'news from Bayonne,' about a row in Spain. The French telegraphs never do anything else."

"I can see all the roofs and chimney-pots along the Rue Racine," said Mr. Ledbury. "And—I say, Jack—look here: this is the great point. No; you must get up, and put your head through. There; do you see that window where the canary-bird is?"

"Quite well, Leddy. What is it?"

"That's where the little Belgian lives. She's an *illumineuse*—paints maps and things. Isn't it jolly?"

"Very," said Jack, wedging himself a little tighter into the skylight, until there appeared a chance of their getting fixed there irremediably. "I don't much see what use it is, though."

"Oh, telegraph—telegraph, Jack! beats St. Sulpice all to nothing. Look here, now."

Whereupon Mr. Ledbury contrived, by dint of sheer animal force, to release himself from the skylight; and then, taking up a walking-stick, he put a glove on it, and removing the bit of looking-glass which formed his mirror from the wall, reascended.

"Now, first, we must call her attention," said Titus; "and I do that when the sun is out, by making a Jack-o'-lantern on the canary-bird. There—see how it frightens him, and what a row he makes. That will bring her to the window."

Mr. Ledbury was right. In half a minute Clara's pretty face peeped between the convolvulus leaves which ran upon bits of tape all over the windows, and nodded to him.

"Now for the burgee," said Mr. Ledbury, who had learned the name when somebody took him one day in a yacht to Erith, but had not the wildest notion of its meaning. "Here goes." And he hoisted up the glove on the walking-stick. "There—that means, 'Can you come to the Chaumière to-night?'"

The little grisette shook her head, and held up a map half-coloured; and then retiring for an instant, she brought forward a champagne-bottle, which evidently served for a candlestick—for there was a little piece still in it—and putting it on the coping before her, held up all her fingers and laughed.

"Now I know what she means," said Mr. Ledbury. "She can't come to the Chaumière, because she has work to do; but she will sup with us at ten o'clock. She's a good one; isn't she, Jack?"

"I'm sure, if you say so, she is," replied his friend, getting down; and then Mr. Ledbury, after a rapid series of nods to the beloved object, which made him look like a galvanized mandarin, followed him.

"You won't come and live here, then, Jack, while you stay in Paris?" asked Titus, as they reached the floor.

"No, I think not. There isn't room to swing a kitten, Leddy, to say nothing of a cat."

"Well, but we didn't come to Paris for that, you know," said Mr. Ledbury. "Besides, I haven't seen such a thing as a cat since I have been here. I can't tell how it is. With such capital tiles as these are, they would have swarmed like flies in London."

"It's all owing to the *restaurateurs*," said Jack. "Wherever you see '*lapin*' on their bill of fare, you may be sure there are no cats at large in the neighbourhood. They are not even in Leicester Square as they used to be, since all the cheap French houses started up. Fact: depend upon it."

Before long they joined Jules and Henri on the floor below, and went together to dine at Viot's, the eating-house which the students of the Quartier Latin chiefly love to patronize. It is a thing that should not be missed, a dinner "*chez Viot*." The *carte* is extensive, and not at all expensive: you may get off famously for a franc, including a sou for the waiter. You don't often see much wine there; but there is an unlimited supply of water, somewhat tepid, and in hazy decanters; but it quenches the thirst of the students just as well as if it had been kept in crystal filters and Wenhams ice all the day. They have some remarkable beverage, too, which they call "*bière blanche*;" translated, it might be termed "intermediate," from forming a gradation between penny ginger-beer and the traditional result of rinsing out portertubs and washing brewers' aprons, which low minds denominate "swipes." Their meats are six sous the plate; their vegetables and dessert, three; bread is *à discrétion*; and the labours of M. Viot—who looks like the knave of clubs setting up for himself in the licensed victualler line—in cutting up the long rolls are beyond description. The waiters, too, are all pictures. They outdo all the jugglers you ever saw, in balancing pyramids of dishes on their arms; and their single-breath orders of "*Une Julienne—deux croûtons—un bœuf aux choux—trois haricots verts à l'huile—un pommes sautées (avec beaucoup de jus)—deux biftecks un peu saignants—un œufs sur le plat—deux fraises—deux fromages à la crème—un riz au lait-t-t-t!*" are sounds which will readily be remembered by the old *habitues* of the house.

There is a great excitement, too, at a dinner at Viot's, which assists digestion, for man is gregarious; and, besides, the incomprehensible *côtelette* of the tavern is far beyond the soddened lonely chop of lodgings, albeit you know not of what animal fibre

it is composed. And the noise is quite charming. What with the unceasing orders, as above given; the shutting of the glass-door into the street, which makes all the windows go off every minute with a bang, owing to their thin glass and scanty metal frames, like the clash of a brass band; the cataracts of dirty plates shot down the inclined plane into the kitchen; the shouts of impatient guests; the clatter of table implements, and the deep responsive "Ho!" of the barytone cook, who rivals the "Garçon Lablache" of the Palais Royal Café in his low notes,—what with all this, the meal is delightful, at least when you get used to it. On your first visit the row takes all your appetite away, so intense is your terror. But Mr. Ledbury and Jack were not so easily frightened. This is what they each had.

VIOT, RESTAURANT.

Rue de la Harpe.

SOUS

6

1 *Potage (Purée aux Croûtons)* .

This is, as tea-merchants say of three-and-sixpenny congon, "a fine old-fashioned" soup. Its component parts are unknown; but it is supposed to be made of dice of bread fried in dripping, and then simmered in whatever comes handy, from cabbage-water to kitchen-stuff, flavoured with diluted peas-pudding. It is very nourishing.

1 *Bifteck aux Pommes* .

6

A popular dish. The "bifteck" should more properly be termed a rasher, as it is here cooked. It looks like a large broiled mushroom. It is called beef, as cheese is sometimes termed a rabbit, or certain preparations of veal, "olives." Physiologists are divided in their opinions respecting it; but the majority agree that it is an artful combination of horse and india-rubber.

1 *Haricots verts à l'Anglaise*

3

An interesting example of the supposed advantage of making things foreign, "haricots à l'Anglaise" being precisely what we call "French beans." They are eaten with a curious lump of adipose substance, very similar to that used to put into the boxes of railway wheels, which is dabbed on the top, and allowed to melt there.

1 *Fraises du Bois*

3

A little plate of wild strawberries, really very good when

SOUS

eaten without another mysterious adjunct served with them, which looks like a saucer full of whitewash.

The Garçon

1

This is dropped into a vase on the counter, on which the lady in attendance, who displays the slightest suspicion in the world of rouge, gracefully inclines her head, in return to the bow from the guest.

Total

19

Leaving change out of the franc. The "leg of beef soup, with bread and potatoes, for threepence," in St. Giles's, is the only dinner that beats this for cheapness. Berthollini cannot be mentioned in the same breath.

The dinner being over, the party repaired to one of the *cafés* in the Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine, and here the remainder of the afternoon was spent in billiards. Mr. Ledbury did not particularly shine in the game. He played with wrong balls, and never knew which was the spot; and sent it flying, when he did, over cushions, and out of the window, and down-stairs, and into all kinds of irregular places; and, although he was always chalking his cue, this did not improve his play, until at last, having cut the cloth into a right-angled laceration, he gave it up, and ordering his "*demi-tasse*" and accompaniment, looked on.

Jack continued to play, as well as the artist, and at last they got up a large game at pool, which Henri was fortunate enough to win. And, as the evening was advancing, Mr. Ledbury thought it was time to call for Clara, which proposition was readily agreed to. Jules and Henri also—by such a lucky chance—met Eulalie, and Sophie, and Héloïse, so that each had now a companion. Jack offered his arm to the latter—a dark-eyed, very-wicked-indeed-looking Lyonnaise. He could not do otherwise, of course, if only from mere politeness. Perhaps it was as well Emma did not see him: not that there was the slightest harm in it, but ladies' imaginations, in matters of jealousy, are like microscopes, and make the most wonderful images out of the smallest objects, magnifying tiny innocent creatures into monsters so terrible that the normal state of the earth cannot show their parallel. As it was, they were all very joyous, and Henri promised to spend all his winnings in festivity that evening; upon which they proceeded together to the Café Anglais, to the great delight of the grisettes, who had never aspired beyond the Palais Royal.

Be sure that the supper was noisy enough. A *réunion* of this kind can never be very dull on the Boulevards; for, putting on

one side the lights, and lustres, and looking-glasses, the busy, cheerful noise of life and relaxation, and the constant motion of the guests, as attributes at all *cafés* increased in *estaminets* by the click of billard-balls and the rollicking of dominoes, there is a most joy-inspiring air about the houses on the Boulevards. The hundreds of twinkling lamps on the stalls round the theatres and at the side of the hack carriages—the perambulating *marchands*, each also with his little basket illuminated—the twanging of guitars and harps, or the jingling hum of tambourines, and the countless, indescribable vocal and instrumental sounds in all directions—the leaping forth of emancipated corks, when a bottle of *limonade gazeuse* creates as great an effect as one of champagne,—all contribute to an *ensemble* which defies anything like melancholy.

Mr. Ledbury was never so rich. The jokes he made were perfectly marvellous; and so the rest would have thought, if they could have understood but one word of them; but puns are difficult to translate into French, and especially Mr. Ledbury's; but when they did not laugh at what he said, they laughed at him himself, which made him just as happy. And when he showed them how to draw up cherries into his mouth by the stalk, and finally to put the large claw of the lobster on his nose, my heart, how they all screamed! so rapturously, that Henri got black in the face, and Jack got up and untied his neckcloth, and patted his back; which medical proceeding only increased the uproar to such a pitch, that some dressed-to-death English ladies, whose husbands had taken them from their hotels to see the *cafés*, insisted that staying there any longer was not proper, and declared such disgraceful creatures ought not to be permitted to come in! And yet, *au fond*, there was no great harm in the merry party; and the little grisettes might, perhaps, have held their heads as high and proudly as any of the "Browns," who appeared angry that, after loading themselves with all the expensive things they could procure, they did not produce any effect like the trim figures, close-fitting *barèges* and wicked little caps of French girls.

At last they found that they had all ordered as much as they had money to pay for, which alone brought the festival to an end; and then they all turned out upon the boulevard to go home, chorusing some popular polka, which Mr. Ledbury illustrated with Clara in front of them along the pavement; for it was a *pas* he ever loved to dance, knowing his elegance therein. Indeed, such was his devotion to it, that nobody at last would go with him to the Promenade Concerts, or the band in Kensington Gardens; for, whenever a polka was played, he incontinently danced

thereto, unless restrained by physical force, its effect on him only being excelled by that which, as recent observation shows us, the high-pressure speed of a locomotive is apt to have upon the natives of Ethiopia residing in Alabama. And this dance and chorus lasted until they left the Boulevards, and turned down towards the southern part of the city.

The night-police of Paris are not too obtrusive. The streets are watched by the municipal guard, who go about in bodices, and when they have passed you may play up whatever games you like for the next half-hour, from the indefinite "old gooseberry"—if you know it—to the devil, who is at all times very popular and ubiquitous here. And so Jack, who was becoming very light-hearted, commenced the sports and pastimes by leaping up and pulling down one of the little boards labelled "*Appartement garni à louer présentement*," which hang in such numbers over the *portes cochères* of the houses. This species of entertainment, being new in Paris, was immediately pronounced a hit; and accordingly the gentlemen started off on either side of the way, taking a jump at all they saw, until they had collected a dozen of them at the end of the street. The question now arose as to how these should be carried, when Henri saw a tempting-looking board over a shop, on which was painted the sign of a man making chocolate in his shirt-sleeves, and it was accordingly doomed. By a little modification of what circus-bills call "the human pyramids of the Atheniau acrobats of the Pyrenees;" they contrived to climb upon one another's shoulders until they pulled it down; and then they stacked the other little boards upon it.

There was a little debate as to who should carry it. At length, by each stating that he did not dare to do it, they got Mr. Ledbury to say he would, for he thought the act of bravery would distinguish him in the eyes of the young ladies; and, accordingly, he put the board on his head, and marched on, having crushed his hat down like a Gibus, but with no chance, like a Gibus, of springing up again. But this he did not mind; for he felt that he was the "marquis," so to speak, of the party, and that was all in all sufficient; so he balanced his cargo with one arm, and offered the other to Clara, as proud as an undertaker carrying the tray of feathers, like pies, in front of his first carriage-funeral.

Now they had all got somewhere to put the things, they did not mind what they took possession of. They pulled down a great red tin hand from a glovemaking's, and a cocked hat from another shop, and, finally, carried off half a dozen plaster masks of Grisi, Rubini, Thillon, Plessy, and others, which hung at the entrance of the Galerie Colbert, until Mr. Ledbury could scarcely

move; but he kept bravely on until they reached the Place des Victoires, when, on arriving at the foot of Louis the Fourteenth's statue, he gasped out that he must rest a minute, which was agreed to.

"Now, look here, Leddy," said Jack, struck by a sudden idea. "I've got a notion that will immortalize you."

"What is it, Jack?" asked Titus, eagerly.

"See this board with 'Unfurnished room to let' on it. What do you say to tying this round the head of the statue, and leaving it there?"

"Glorious! capital!" said Mr. Ledbury; "I'll do it!"

"Stop!" said Jack; "take your time. Mind the rails—there—now—be sure of your footing. I should like to do it myself, only you are the tallest."

With a boldness that only the grisettes' eyes and the champagne could have given him, Mr. Ledbury, by the help of his long arms and legs, contrived to reach the statue, and fix the announcement on his head. But he had barely finished this, when Jack, who was ever on the *qui vive*, heard something like the measured tramp in one of the streets running into the Place, and exclaimed, in a quick, alarmed voice,

"Look out, boys! Here's the guard coming round. Get down, Leddy, get down! Jules! Henri! take up the boards and things. We must be off. Keep the pedestal between them and ourselves. Leddy, look sharp, I tell you—down the Rue des Petits Champs!"

They were all on the alert. Unwilling to leave their prizes, they lifted up the board, and, followed by the grisettes, went off as swiftly and as quietly as they could down the street Johnson had indicated. But poor Mr. Ledbury—he was in a sad way. His coat-tails had got, somehow or other, by some strange accident, which never would have occurred to anybody but himself, entangled in the metal trappings of the horse, and he could not move. He uttered a fearful cry to "Stop!" as the others flitted off; but it was of no avail. The next minute the guard entered the Place, and, seeing his outline against the moonbeams, marched up to him, and ordered him to descend. For a moment a wild thought entered his head of keeping them at bay, knowing they could not reach him with their accoutrements; but at the very first demonstration made to this effect, the muskets were pointed at him, and he was compelled, with the loss of his tails, to come down.

Meanwhile, Jack, unwilling to leave him all alone, returned with the Lyonnaise in the rear of the guard; and they stood

looking on as casual spectators, until Mr. Ledbury reached the ground in a sorry plight enough. He immediately perceived his friend, and Jack feared he should also be apprehended in consequence of the recognition. Wonderfully enough, Mr. Ledbury saw in an instant the utter futility of showing that they were acquainted; but he felt somewhat comforted that Jack was near him, and directly, without a word, accompanied the patrol to the Corps de Garde as a prisoner — his second appearance in that character since we first knew him in Paris.

There was something so very novel in the charge, that the head-patrol scarcely knew what to make of it; but he saw enough to be convinced that Mr. Ledbury was in a state of fermented beverages; and, therefore, instead of looking him up, as he looked respectable, he allowed him to sit until morning in the lodge; and then, assured that he was no agent to any secret society, and that the placard had no reference to shooting at royalty, he sent a guard up with him to his lodgings, to ascertain if his address was true. He was pleased to see Jack waiting for him at the door of the Corps de Garde; and he was followed by his friend to the Rue Racine, wherein his lodgings were situated.

As they went up-stairs, Johnson passed quickly by them, and whispered a word or two to Ledbury in English; and then he continued on, until he came to the artists' studio, into which they entered, followed by the landlord, the porter, the porter's wife, one or two lodgers, and some idlers, whom the appearance of the guard had brought together, in the expectation of seeing a room discovered full of infernal machines, seditious papers, and arms of all sorts.

Mr. Ledbury's room was here indicated to the authorities, and they were about to enter it, when Titus threw himself before it, and begged they would desist; but finding that the guard, which never yielded generally, was not disposed to do so on the present occasion in particular, he next changed from the suppliant to the heroic state, and, thumping his breast, said that if they entered it should be through his heart, which would have been a curious way of getting into a room. Whereupon the Sergent de Ville asked him for his key, which Mr. Ledbury produced, and with a melodramatic "Jamais!" threw it far away through the window. On this, the word was given to apply the butt-ends of the guns to the door; and, as the iron-work of France is not celebrated for massive strength, it yielded at the first blow. What was the surprise of the party to see, surrounded by the masks, tin gloves, boards, and cocked-hats—the spoils of the preceding night—the pale, trembling, pretty form of Clara, the little Belgian!

You must not prejudice her. Let us hasten to show how she came there; for appearances are certainly against her. She had gone home with the others; but finding it so late, and afraid to ring up the *concierge* of her house, who was a terrible babbler, the rest had offered her Mr. Ledbury's room, knowing pretty well that he would be furnished that night with a lodging by the authorities; and the champagne and advanced hours had kept the grisette in bed far beyond her usual time. To this effect had Jack spoken to Mr. Ledbury on the staircase; and this accounted for his chivalric behaviour.

The proprietor of the house was in a dreadful state of virtuous indignation at the discovery, and the various articles strewed about the chamber increased his wrath. He bustled into the room, and turned poor Clara out in the most ungallant manner by the shoulder, on which Mr. Ledbury would have flown at him, but for the guard; and then, kicking the various articles to the landing with his foot, he seemed inclined to include Mr. Ledbury with them. At all events, he told him to quit the house that instant; that he forgave him all his rent, but that he should not stay there a minute longer, so that he had better follow his carpet-bag, which he had already got to the floor below. Upon this the lodgers started a great cry of execration, which brought all the rest out of doors, and the tumult increased to a pitch that was absolutely fearful, until Mr. Ledbury reached the front gate, whence, from the new feature given to his case by the stolen property, he was compelled to return to the guard-house, as well as poor little Clara, who already pictured herself in a long white dress, with her hair down her shoulders, going to the guillotine.

Fortunately, the head-officer was a good fellow, who had been a student himself, and at once saw the state of things. The grisette was immediately acquitted; and Mr. Ledbury was compelled to give up his passport (which is equivalent to putting in bail, as you cannot well move without it), and wait, under the surveillance of the police, until such times as the people should claim their goods, and the Procureur du Roi should "invite" him to appear at the Palais du Justice to explain his motives; and then he also was allowed to depart.

"We must cut as fast as we can, Leddy," said Jack, as they met outside.

"But I can't," replied Titus. "I must stay here, for they've got my passport. And that pretty girl! Really—I don't know—but I've put her in such a very awkward predicament, that I think some little attention—I can't explain exactly—but now, don't you, Jack?"

"Oh, we'll set all that to rights," replied Johnson. "You really are not safe to go alone yet, Leddy; but there's no mistake about it, we must be off, and sell them all. I'll manage it."

And Jack was as good as his word. That very afternoon he went to a railway friend of his, a gentleman who was in a temporary state of provisional exile, and got his passport *viséd* for England, promising to send it back to him in a letter as soon as they arrived. And then he booked two places also that afternoon in the Boulogne *diligence*, for himself in his own name, and Mr. Ledbury as Mr. Straggles, and departed at once; although, as Titus said, it tore his heart-strings to leave the little Belgian so abruptly. But Johnson told him to have a pipe, and promised to send her over six pairs of English stockings, which is a present grisettes prize above diamonds and all other jewels of great price, and that then he would be quite happy.

There was a little parting dinner at a *restaurant*, close to the Messageries; and Jules and Henri promised to come to England in the spring. And—it ought scarcely to be mentioned in fairness—just before he took his seat, Mr. Ledbury gave the little Belgian a kiss, and not only one, but two or three good downright long ones, all of them. And then they waved an adieu, and the postillion "*créé'd*" as usual, and the *conducteur* lighted a cigar, and the passengers got silent and sleepy. And being blessed with a quick journey and a fair passage, that time the next day they were at Folkestone, once more under the shelter of the British Lion, and out of all danger from guards, guillotines, and galleys—and, perhaps, what is more, from sparkling-eyed grisettes.

LORD MAYOR'S DAY.

I do not remember to have met with a matter-of-fact description of Lord Mayor's Day. Some years ago, the late Mr. Theodore Hook published a famous story called "The Splendid Annual," in which he depicted, as he only could have done it, the glory of the Lord Mayor when he took possession of his office, and the grandeur thereunto attached, ending with a capital account of the indignities he endured when he sank the mayor in the citizen at the conclusion of his reign. Every year the papers come out with long lists of the viands provided upon the occasion; the quantity of tureens of turtle, "each containing three pints;" the number of dishes of potatoes, "mashed and otherwise;" the bottles of "sherbet," which I take to be the *Guildhall* for "punch;" the plates of biscuits, and the removes of game; enough in themselves to have emptied all the West India ships, Irish fields, Botolph-clane warehouses, ovens, preserves, and shops generally, ever known or recognized. And they also tell us how the Lord Mayor went, and how he came back; how he was joined, on his return at the Obelisk in Fleet Street, by all the noble and distinguished personages invited to the banquet at Guildhall; and what were the speeches given. But they omit the common-place details; and as this is something that is sought after, now-a-days, whether it relates to a visit to a pin-manufactory, a day in a coal-mine, or a dinner in the City, I venture to give a report: and I beg to state that this is intended more for the amusement of my friends in quiet country nooks and corners than for those who know City dinners by heart, and can look back through a long vista of many years at the sparkling splendour of Guildhall, as on our retreat from Vauxhall we used to cast a glance at the Neptune at the end of the walk, ever spouting out amidst his jets and glories.

My earliest recollections of Lord Mayor's Day are connected with my scholarship of Merchant Taylors'. The school was once called "Merchant Tailors'"; but I remember, when instruction in writing was first introduced there, and we had copies to do, with the name of the establishment as our motto, that our esteemed head-master, "Bellamy" (for "Reverend" or "Mr." were terms alike unknown to us), altered the orthography. "How will you have 'Tailors' spelt, sir?" asked Mr. Clarke, who had

come from the Blue-Coat School (if I remember aright) to teach us our pothooks and hangers. "With a y, most certainly," was the answer of the "Jack Gull;" for Bellamy (that I should live to write his name thus lightly, and so treat him without fear of imposition! but he was a goodly creature and a great scholar, and will forgive me) had his name inscribed over the door of the schoolroom as "*Jac. Gull. Bellamy, B.D., Archididascolo*," and from this abbreviation he took his cognomen amongst the boys. And so, we did not mind being called "snips" by opposing schools (and, mind you, we had great fights with Mercers' and St. Paul's thercaunt, and pitched battles in Little St. Thomas Apostle and Great Knightrider Street), but we stuck to the y, and henceforth believed greatly in our school, and its motto: "*Parvæ res concordia crescunt*," although ribald minds still told us that its true translation was, "Nine tailors make a man."

But I humbly beg pardon: all this time I am forgetting Lord Mayor's Day. It was to me a great holiday. I had some kind friends in Bridge Street, Blackfriars, who always invited me, on that festival, to join their party; and from their windows, over the little court that runs from the above-named thoroughfare into Bride Lane, I first beheld the pageant. I look back upon those meetings now with very great pleasure; enough, I hope, to excuse my dilating upon them in these few lines. None of the parties which, as a floating literary man upon town, I have since been thrown up with, have ever equalled them in unstrained fun and honest welcome. I can recall vividly the crowd in the street; the only parallel to which I ever saw was from the roof of Newgate previous to an execution; for a mob is not particular as to the object of its assembling. The visitors, and above all the girls, at the windows above; the laughter that the pieman caused when he was pushed about by the crowd; the hard time the applewoman had of it when she unadvisedly ventured into the middle of the street, with the pertinacity of a half-price pit fruit-vendor; the impudent boy who had got on the lamp-post, and actually made faces at the policeman, knowing that he was beyond his power; the fortunate people, having possession of the door-step, looked down upon their fellows; and, above all, the lucky mob, whom it was the fashion in after times, before the misery of Europe put them at a discount, to call "the people," who had carried the obelisk by storm, and perched themselves upon every available ledge,—all these things, I say, I can recall, and wish I could look at them again with the same feelings of fresh enjoyment, before it was so constantly dunned, and hammered, and insisted on, and bawled into my ears that "purpose" was the end of all observation.

Well, the crowd jostled, and swayed, and quarrelled, and chafed, and at last the procession started from the bridge. Its commencement was difficult to determine. You saw a flag waving about amidst an ocean of hats, and an active gentleman on horse-back riding backwards and forwards to clear the way. Then the flag stopped, until more flags came up—from where goodness only knows—and waved about also. Then the sound of a distant band was heard, only the bass notes falling on the ear in that unsatisfactory strain that reaches you when a brass band is in the next street; and at last there did appear to be an actual movement. Large banners, that nearly blew the men over, preceded watermen, and “companies,” and all sorts of bands played various tunes as they passed under the windows, until they were lost up Ludgate Hill, until at length came the “ancient knights.” They were the lions of the show. I had long wondered at them from their “effigies” in a moving toy I had of the Lord Mayor’s Show, which my good father had made for me when quite a little boy; and henceforth they were always the chief attraction. I can now picture their very style of armour, their scale surtouts and awe-inspiring helmets, which reckless spirits have since called brass “*blancmange* moulds;” the difficulty they had to sit upright; the impossibility it would have been for them to have stood a course, “in the name of Heaven, our Lady, and St. George,” in lists. But they were very fine. And then came the carriages, so like other toys I bought at the fair, in a long box, where the coachman had a curly goose’s feather in his hat, and the horses dazzled with Dutch metal; then came other bands, and the huzzas, and the mob again. It was all very delightful; and nothing ever moved me so much, not even the procession in *The Jewess*, when I first saw it. And it was very proper too. Now I am writing this very paper in the depths of the country. A wood fire is flashing upon the wainscot panels of my vast bedroom, which are crackling, from time to time, with its heat. The air without is nipping, and frosty, and dead still. A fine old hound, who has chosen to domicile himself with me for the night, is lying on the rug, like a dead hare, dreaming fitfully of bygone chases; and nothing is heard but the wheezing turret clock, that sounds as if it had not been oiled since the Reformation. It is impossible to conceive anything more opposite to a sympathy with civic festivity than this picture; but yet I look back to New Bridge Street and Lord Mayor’s Day with the greatest gratification. I do not call the pageant “slow” or absurd. I only think, if the spirit that would suppress it, with our other institutions, had been allowed to run wilful riot abroad, where would our

homes and hearths have been at present? What would the *marchands* of Paris, from the Chaussée d'Antin to the Quartier Latin, not give to see any of their festivals of the middle ages progressing in the same unaltered, steady-going fashion as our own "Lord Mayor's Show?"

The procession over, I cared not what became of its constituents; and it was not until a few years ago that I ever had the chance of dining at Guildhall, and seeing what became of the principal part of them.

The ticket I received was wonderfully imposing; a whole sheet of Bristol board had apparently been used in its construction; and it was accompanied by a plan of all the plates at the table, my own being painted red, so that I knew at once where to sit. It did not say at what time the dinner would be ready, but informed me that nobody would be admitted after a certain hour; so, that, from some hazy recollection of the procession taking in its distinguished guests at the obelisk about three o'clock, I thought four would be a proper hour to arrive at Guildhall. The ride thither was by no means the least striking part of the day's excitement. From Ludgate Hill to Gresham Street my cab ploughed its course through the densest mob of people I ever saw; and as they were all in the way, and had to be "Hi'd!" and sworn at, and policed therefrom, I do not believe anyone ever received so many epithets, more or less complimentary, in half an hour, as I did during that time. The windows were alive with heads—where the bodies thereunto belonging were crammed was impossible to guess—and not only the windows, but the balconies and copings, the tops of shop-fronts and parapets, were equally peopled; and this continued all the way to the doors of Guildhall, where my ticket and hat were delivered up, and I entered the Hall.

The effect upon entering was very beautiful. The long lines of tables, sparkling with glass and plate, were striking in themselves; but they were comparatively nothing. The noble building itself, with its picturesque architecture outlined by dazzling gas jets; the brilliant star at the western window, and the enormous Prince of Wales's feather of spun glass, at the eastern, surmounting the trophy of armour; the helmets, banners, and breastplates hung round; the men-at-arms on their pedestals in bright harness; the barons of beef on their pulpits; and, above all, Gog and Magog gazing, as they had gazed for centuries, on the banquet, carrying fearfully spiked weapons, which now-a-days nobody but Mr. W. H. Payne is allowed to use—and he only in a pantomime: all this formed a tableau really exciting: and, distant matters being

considered, made one think there was no national conceit in the pride and glory of being an Englishman after all.

From the Hall the majority of the guests went on to the Council Chamber, where the presentations were to take place; and here there was amusement enough to be found in watching the toilets of the company. The gentlemen in their court-dresses and coloured gowns, were well enough: there was a grave municipal appearance about them that set off the scene wonderfully, nor could it have been possible to have seen so many good old honest intelligent heads together anywhere else. But we must run the risk of being considered for ever ungallant in saying that the dress of the ladies, with few exceptions, was in itself worth going to see. Their costumes were not poor — on the contrary, they were as magnificent as Genoa, Lyons, and Mechlin could make them. Neither were they old-fashioned: such would not have been altogether out of keeping. But they were singularly comical; the most heterogeneous colours, styles, and trimmings were all jumbled together: and the wonderful combinations of manufactures they wore in, and on, and round their heads, would require a list as long as the *Morning Post's* after a drawing-room to describe. Caricatures of the *coiffures* of all the early Queens of France and England might have been detected, by a sharp eye, amongst the company; nay, one old lady had made up so carefully after Henry VIII., that, with whiskers and beard, she would have been wonderful. Amongst them, to be sure, were some lovely girls who would have put the West-end belles upon their mettle—faultless in dress and *tournure* as a presentation beauty—but they were overwhelmed by the dowagers.

There did not appear to be much to be seen here, for it was impossible to get near the dais, so I went back to the Hall, to my place at the table, and learnt, to my sorrow, that dinner would not take place before seven. But there was plenty to be amused at as the more distinguished guests arrived, and passed on to the Council Chamber through an avenue of gazers, being announced by name as they entered. This name, however, it was impossible to catch; every one, from the size of the place, ended in unintelligible reverberations. So that from “Lord Or-r-r-r!” “Mr. Baron Pr-r-r-r!” or “Captain Uls-s-s-s!” you made out what you conceived to be the most probable, and were contented accordingly. From time to time a brass band in the gallery played selections from operas; hungry gentlemen looked wistfully at the cold capons; and frantic officials, with white wands, ran about with messages and ordered the waiters. For myself, I confess to having settled quietly down on my form, and made

myself as perfectly happy with my French roll and some excellent Madeira as any one could possibly have desired.

At length some trumpets announced the approach of the Lord Mayor; and his procession, including my dear old friend of childhood, with the large flower-pot-shaped muff upon his head, entered the Hall to a grand march. They came in long array down the steps, then round the end below Gog and Magog, along the southern side, and so up to their tables. This was really impressive; and, as the civic authorities, the judges, and serjeants, the trumpeters, and all the rest, marched round, one was tempted to think much more of Dick Whittington, and Sir William Walworth, Evil May Day, the Conduit in Chepe, together with Stow, Strutt, Holinshed, and Fitzstephen than the present Lord Mayor of London, and all the municipal, military, naval, and forensic celebrities that accompanied him, to the tune of "Oh, the roast beef of old England!" played in the gallery.

Our good friend Mr. Harker—without whom I opine all public dinners would go for nothing, and the Old Bailey Court become a bear-garden—gave the signal for grace, the tureens having already appeared upon the tables during the *cortége*; and then what a warfare of glass and crockery, of knives and forks and spoons, and calipash and calipee began! The hapless guests by the tureens had a hard time of it in supplying their fellow visitors; and the rule for politeness in the "Book of Etiquette" which says "it is bad taste to partake twice of soup," had evidently never been learnt; for they partook not only twice, but three times, and would, doubtless, have gone on again but for the entire consumption of the delicacy. For the vast number of people present it was astonishing, by the way, how well everybody was attended to. The waiters ran over one another less than they usually do at great dinners; they recollected when you asked for a fork, and brought you one; and if it had not been for their clattering down all the plates and dishes against your heels under your form, the arrangements would have been perfect.

At the head of our table was the most glorious old gentleman I had ever seen. Whether Farringdon Without or Broad Street claimed him as its own, I do not know, for the wards were divided at the table; but whichever it was had a right to be proud of him. He knew everybody, and all treated him with the greatest respect. He was a wit, too, and made some very fair puns; besides which, by his continued pleasantries, he kept the whole table alive. He took wine with all whom he saw were strangers, and offered them his snuff-box with a merry speech. He was the best mixture of the fine old courtier and common councilman it

was possible to conceive, and my admiration of his good fellowship was increased, when I was told that he was actually eighty-two years of age! I should like to have had some quiet talk with that old gentleman. He must have known many youths, barely living on their modest salary, who afterwards rode in their own carriages in the Lord Mayor's procession — perhaps as chief actors. He could, I will be bound, have told us of the banquet given to the allied sovereigns in that very old Guildhall. But he left our table early, and when he went, and told us all that he was going home to put on his slippers and have a cigar, we were really grieved to part with him, and could have better spared the tetchy gentleman near him, who did nothing but squabble with the waiters and threaten to report them.

The dinner was despatched — the cold turkeys, and hams, and tongues, and the tolerably hot pheasants and partridges—in less time than might be conceived. There was no lack of anything. The punch was unexceptionable, the Madeira of the choicest, and the champagne unlimited. And after all this, a bevy of pretty young ladies, with an equal number of gentlemen, appeared in the south music gallery to sing the grace, which they did very well. The visitors evidently knew their business. They did not applaud, when the grace was over, in the manner of some reckless and enthusiastic spirits fresh at a public dinner, who look upon it as they would do upon a Cider Cellars chorus, but received it gravely, filled their glasses, and waited for what was to come next. Then the trumpets sounded, and were answered from the other end of the Hall, and the new Lord Mayor rose and proposed "The Queen." And if her Majesty could have heard how that toast was received, with an enthusiasm that made the very men-in-armour totter on their pedestals, and Gog and Magog almost invisible through the haze of excitement, she would have known that the expression of her belief in the allegiance of her good old City of London, with which she was accustomed to respond to addresses, were beyond the conventional, after all.

The remaining toasts could only be heard by those at the principal table; but when the ladies left, the gentlemen went up, and stood about on the forms and benches to see and hear the "great guns" of the evening. Afterwards tea and coffee were served in a long room to the right of the Council Chamber, and then dancing began in the latter apartment, until the part of the Hall above the railing was cleared for the same purpose. During this period the company had an opportunity of seeing two very clever pieces of scenic view which were displayed, to be looked at through windows, on what might possibly otherwise have been

a blank wall. These were modelled representations of the Tower, and the Rialto at Venice. They had a charming effect; the sober light and air of tranquillity thrown over them being in excellent contrast with the noise and brilliancy of what was in reality "the hall of dazzling light," usually treated as a poetic and, perhaps, apocryphal piece of festivity inseparable from striking a light guitar.

The dancing was famously kept up, "with unabated spirit," as newspapers say of a ball. The dancers were evidently very happy, and believed greatly in everything about them, and if we could always do the same in society we should have little to grumble at. At last, not choosing to let the world generally know at what hour my faithful latch-key put me in possession of that most inestimable property, one's own bedroom, I slipped off, and arrived at home with calm propriety, filled with gratitude to the Lord Mayor, the sheriffs, and the corporation generally, for a very hospitable (and, to me, a very novel) entertainment.

BEDFORDIA.

NEITHER Mr. Peter Cunningham nor Mr. John Timbs, in their excellent books about London, have done becoming justice to the varied district of Bedfordia. Why not "Bedfordia?" It has as much right to have a square for its sponsor as any other region more favoured by patrician homes. Belgravia is great in ancestral exclusiveness, and Tyburnia weighty in successful commerce, and Bedfordia is equally important—in its way.

I would define Bedfordia as somewhat freely bounded on the east by the Foundling Hospital, and on the west by that of Middlesex. Northwards, the New Road forms its frontier; and to the south, the rolling tide of Oxford Street prevents its respectability running astray in St. Giles's. Its inhabitants would repudiate Tottenham-court Road if they could, but it is impossible. It is the great artery of the quarter; and were it, in surgical phrase, "taken up," no other branches could carry on the circulation of vitality into the contiguous component members.

It comprises several squares besides the one from which it takes its name. The frigid Fitzroy, the respectable Russell, the bland Bloomsbury, and the two-windowed Torrington, ventilate its atmosphere. A large portion of its inhabitants live as they choose; an equally large portion live as they can. Russell Square is the region of the first class, Rathbone Place of the second.

Let us consider the first. Possibly nowhere else in London is the conventional mechanism of set social life so gravely observed. The heavy morning call in the heavier carriage—the *raide* routine of the society altogether—the grim grind of the dull dinner-parties—the belief that certain articles can only be procured at certain shops, and those the most expensive—the creed that establishes the importance of the tongue and brains of Gunter on the table over the tongues and brains of anybody round it—the immature French beans in April, only because they are dear—the drawing-room table with the same books and articles on it, in the same places, from year to year—the loss what to say next in conversation, and the leaden platitude that it turns out to be when it is said—the pompous, empty arrogance of disbelief in

the immeasurable self-relying superiority of artistic and literary life,—all these attributes, and thousands of others that their combined influence, acting together, produce, characterize “the Squares.”

I have terribly dull recollections connected with “the Squares.” I had all sorts of relations living all about them when I was a child at school, and I used to dine with one or the other on Sunday. It was not lively. However fine the morning might be, the heavy carriage always took us to the Foundling Chapel, which was close at hand; for, but for this, how could other people see the carriage? And I had, after this, to walk round and round long tables, and see small children eat graviless boiled beef off wooden plates; and my relations used to think it such a pretty condescension if they—being governors and coming in their carriages—tasted a piece of boiled beef and pronounced it very good. And having done this, they would look round and smile complacently, as if they had achieved a feat; in the same way as I have seen feeble persons do upon crossing the road, or entering an omnibus or railway. The sight of these little children dining would have been pretty enough once in its way, but it bored me on constant repetition. And it bored my relations too; they did not derive a grain of amusement from it; but it is considered “the thing” in “the Squares” to go to the Foundling; and so they wished “to afford an opportunity to all classes”—as they say at an exhibition when it does not pay at a shilling and is reduced to sixpence—to see them there. Not, however, that reduction of price had anything to do with them. On the contrary, if their price of admission as a governor, as painted in the dull gold letters on the black board with the names attached, had been doubled, they would have liked “all classes” to have seen them better.

The ordinary books on the drawing-room table were always removed on Sundays, and replaced by religious ones, which, like their predecessors, were never opened. People called after luncheon, and then the “Observer”—that effete and musty old newspaper, which still seems to be taken in by people who prefer ancient mould candles to moderator lamps, and gives you an impression that the united ages of its editor, leader writers, reporters, and correspondents, must amount to many hundreds—was put behind the sofa cushions. As the merest boy, I was struck with the twaddle the visitors talked; they told one another things that had been in the newspapers days before, and were especially particular in inquiring after persons I knew they did not care twopence about; and when at last they said, “Well, we must go now,” I wondered how it was that the necessity of depar-

ture had not struck them all before. Some friends did not come in, but merely left cards; they were sensible people, and had considerably the best of it. The position of their cards in the large china dish depended, in a great measure, upon who they were. There was a fat, wheezing man, who had been knighted in the City sometime, with a full-blown lady, and who gave heavy dinners, and was very rich, and could procure anything for money except his h's. He was a great card, actually and metaphorically, and was always at the top of the dish. I dined once at his house; it was a solemn and dismal banquet. At one time, for three minutes at least not a word was said—not even a platitude was launched. The servants stalked round the table, and gravely croaked “Hock or Sherry?” in your ear; and there was really nothing left, after you had crumbled all your bread away in desperation, but to drink; and so I took to it for the remainder of the feast. Once I tried to make a little diversion to the dreariness, by offering to bet that there was always more false hair at the Opera on the nights of “Don Giovanni” than at any other representation of the season (which there always is, and I can't tell why), but the attempt was a failure. When we went up-stairs, a lady who could not sing tooted out something, half inaudibly, at a piano that must have cost two hundred guineas at least. Then came a dead pause, and the mistress of the house said, “Oh, thank you—it is so very kind of you;” and somebody near the instrument, obliged to say something, asked whose song it was; and on being told, was no wiser. Then came another pause; and then, as I felt strangely inclined, from simple oppression, to stamp and yell, and smash the costly tea-service that the servant was bringing round, by kicking the tray up into the air, as a relief to my bottled-up feelings, I hurried out of the room, and hurried to find myself once more upon the free and common pavement.

Once leave “the Squares,” and the population of the streets of Bedfordia is more varied than that of any other department in London. It is, *par excellence*, the “Quartier des Arts.” From the varied struggling for a livelihood in Rathbone Place, to the academical aspirations of Upper Charlotte Street, there is not a floor that does not boast an “*artiste*” as an occupant. Heaven only knows how a great part of these folk live! Not the painters who cut large bits out of the fronts of houses over the windows; nor the sculptors who have roomy studios behind, opening into the mews, with the same dusty old plaster heads, and big hands, and casts of human chins hanging about—of no earthly use but to look professional, as tea-dealers display mandarins and Chinese

lanterns—not these clever folks, who are more or less established, but the “professors.” Professors swarm hereabouts. They teach the accordion, and model in leather, and have classes for dancing, French, wax flowers, potichomachie, the guitar, photography, and dress-making. They sell cheap music, and clean gloves, and paint on glass, and dye dresses, and work in hair, and deal in Berlin-wool, and open and close small cigar shops, and retail fancy letter-paper and perforated pasteboard, and songs with piratical frontispieces, shilling books, whereof, like a dancing-show at a fair, the best part is outside, and fancy writing-paper. In fact, they would form, together, the storehouse of that hopeless suburban and semi-marine establishment known as a “Repository”—one of the havens provided for commercial wrecks. For as the Chinese proverb perhaps says, “the barber must be taught his calling, but the repository and the wine-trade require no apprenticeship:” a terse conception of that sagacious and practical people.

If I were asked to name the chief productions of Bedfordia, I should say, “Concerts!” The people who pay the half-guinea for tickets, and the professors who sell them, are alike natives of the district. With the exception of private teaching, this is the only case in which the two classes of the population have much intercourse with each other, and the results of this even are visible only out of the district, except the anomalous gatherings of the Music Hall in Store Street. The concert Bedfordia mostly approves is in the kindly-granted private house of the West-end: when the bedroom chairs descend to the drawing-room, and the more movable knick-knacks go up-stairs for the day in exchange: for safety from breakage, however, be it understood, rather than another danger.

I say “the Squares” mainly support these concerts. The usual *habitués* of the mansion have been too often bored, and stifled, and crushed in the rooms; but when Lady de Robinson kindly allows Signor Dolce Feroce to hold his *matinée* at her residence, “the Squares” love to go, because, for the time, they fancy themselves on visiting terms with the establishment; and when they speak of it afterwards, they say, “they were at Lady de Robinson’s concert on Thursday,” as if her ladyship gave it. The Signor is thus ignored altogether. But he gets, in this case, his guinea a ticket just the same; which, at first sight, may appear a great deal for three hours of heated harmony, occasionally supplied in greater perfection, and more commodiously, by St. James’s or St. Martin’s Hall, for a small fraction of that sum; but as for every ticket sold, eight or ten are given away to eligible people with nice bonnets to “dress” the room and crowd it, and make it

appear to the outer world that the Signor is run after by admiring mobs, the price per head comes to about the same thing in the end.

That Bedfordia is gradually decaying there cannot be the least doubt. It has been for some time the "sick man" of the London quarters. As the corners of its streets have gradually turned into shops, so has its commercial spirit extended, stealing on from house to house, as the dining-room windows are one after the other knocked into shop-fronts. I see more bills of "Apartments to let" about, and I am told that boarding-houses are on the increase. I believe this to be true; for on fine afternoons I see at the drawing-room windows, not one, but two or three of those peculiar caps which only ladies at boarding-houses wear. If, however, this innovation forces new sentiments into "the Squares;" if it teaches them that Verey's ices are as good as Grange's; that dragging round the Park every afternoon is but a ghastly business of show-off, with the lovely environs of London available; that literary people are not all "strange sorts of persons;" that two or three of their favoured watering-places are only bare, chalky, glaring, leafless leagues of pretence, and that they might go to the Pyrenees for the same money; that heavy plate on the table does not compensate for heavier people around it; and that the vulgar old woman with the diamonds and rings who sits next to you is worlds and worlds below the nice governess who has not appeared, but is having a dreary time with the children in the schoolroom,—if the change effects all this and much more in Bedfordia, no amount of administrative reform will ever equal it in value.

THE BOYS IN THE STREETS.

I.—OF THE “PEOPLE”—THE SOURCE OF ALL BOYS.

WE have been some time making up our minds as to the real attributes of the class denominated “the people,” and who, in reality, “the people” are supposed to be.

A long time ago we imagined them to be something unpleasant, for their name was always coupled with a depreciative epithet. We heard of “horrid people,” and “strange people,” and “people nobody liked or visited,” and these were generally amongst the middle classes. Next, we set “the people” down as a mass of weak-minded individuals, from the things we saw especially addressed to them. Whenever anything was advertised formerly for “the people,” it was generally some cheap rubbish that nobody else could be expected to buy. “The People’s Picture Gallery” was probably a reprint from worn-out plates, upon bad paper, of uninteresting subjects. “Holidays for the people” were chiefly characterized by crowds of the lower orders tumbling about the streets tipsy, at late hours on Monday evenings; meetings of thousands at dreary suburban festivals, ringing with the rude joyless riot, so nearly degenerating into absolute brutality, which, unhappily, characterizes all the dull fêtes of the masses in England, compared to those on the Continent; sweltering in close meeting-houses at the end of dirty courts, or National Pantheons, or Athenæums, or other patriotic temples to swill weak infusions of cheap black tea, diluted with spoiled water, as they listened to the noisy gabble of uneducated professors of the “I’m-as-good-as-you” theories of social life; gaping through the British Museum, not from any interest they felt in the collection, but because there were thousands of things they did not understand to be seen there for nothing; availing themselves of the permission to stream through the National Gallery and Hampton Court Palace, and stare at the pictures with precisely the same feelings with which they would look at the paintings outside shows, with the exception that they would like the latter much the best; or returning in the evening—with very, very few exceptions—dusty, tired, and quarrelsome. All this did not elevate “the people” in our estimation.

Anon came the epoch of "virtuous indignation" in literature, by which authors found they could turn their pens to as good account as the spouters on the same subject did their lungs; and various phrases, such as "the wrongs of the poor man," and the "crimes of respectability," were without doubt stereotyped, from the frequency of their occurrence, for their use. The professors travelled about to be stared at, having stirred up "the people" with their long pens until they got the freedoms of the towns presented to them in tin saucepans, or pipkins, or razor-cases, or lucifer-boxes, or other specimens of local manufactures.

And then we learned that "the people" never had any holidays at all, nor any amusements, nor any anything. And yet, by tracking them slyly into various resorts, we found they filled the uproarious galleries of the theatres; or composed the masses who shouted at the election of candidates, not having the ghost of a vote; who blocked up the streets on Lord Mayor's Day, or swarmed round the Old Bailey scaffold. We then began strongly to suspect that the classes known to the old novelists and essayists by the certainly not too elevating titles of "riff-raff" and "tagrag and bobtail," were "the people" of the Virtuous Indignationists of the present time.

Finally, we read what M. Michelet had to say upon the subject, and we left off in a greater haze than ever as to who "the people" were. We, therefore, thought it best to amalgamate the leading points of the various physiologies we have glanced at—and which seemed to be nearest the mark, from observation of the simplest kind—and form our own ideas of "the people" from them; and from this class, it seems to us, that the boys in the streets take their origin, entirely forming themselves "the people" of the next generation. We have begun at the beginning in endeavouring to give some idea of the stock from which spring the branches we are about to describe.

2.—THE EARLY DAYS OF THE BOYS.

THERE are several spots in which, with very little trouble, you may see the embryo boys to great advantage. During fine weather they swarm in broad paved courts, or *culs-de-sac*, in crowded neighbourhoods. Punch's show is a capital ground-bait for them, bringing a hundred instantaneously together, where not a single one was visible a minute before. On the broken ground about to be formed into a new street, or built upon, you may at all times make sure of them. The more irregular it is the more

they love it, and if the cellar arches are already built, the attraction is paramount to every other, except, perhaps, the spot where wood pavement is being taken up or put down; for there they storm and defend forts, or make perilous excursions over mountains all day long.

The boys in this tadpole state—which reptile they somewhat resemble in their active wriggling and love of puddles of water—stand only in awe of one person, and that is the policeman. Their notions of his functions are somewhat vague; but they are certain he can take them up and punish them—for nothing, and from mere wantonness—whenever he pleases. They spy him out quicker than a crow in a field does a man with a gun; if you suddenly see a flying army of children bolting from a court or round a corner in terror, you may be certain that a policeman is close at hand. At a more mature age, they will chaff him and run away; but at present their belief in his greatness is unbounded. He would be the giant or the dragon of their nursery story-books; but, in the first place, they have no nursery, and, in the second, no story-books to read there. And, indeed, the reading is itself a question.

The children of the London streets are acute from their birth. The very babies, crawling on the kerb, or burrowing in the dust of a building plot, have a cunning expression of face which you do not find in the white-headed country infants; and, as soon as they can run alone, their sharpness breaks forth most palpably—they are never to be “done.” In fact, as far as their wits are concerned, they are never children, but miniature men. We have said that it is only in fine weather you see them about; and then they come out like gnats, and are just as troublesome, especially if you are driving. We have no clear notions of what becomes of them when it is wet; we hardly imagine that the neighbouring houses can contain the swarms that we have spoken of. If they do, we pity the other dwellers; we conceive on no other portion of the community can a continuance of rain bring so many discomforts.

The street children have no regular toys; they have seen them in small shop windows, and on stalls, and long barrows, but never possessed any: all they have they invent. Not that their play-things are the less diverting on this account; in any circle of life you may give a child the costliest toys with which it will only be amused for a time, to return to the mere furniture of the nursery. We question if the noblest horse and cart just bought from Mr. Myers, or Mr. Cremer, or in any of the bazaars, ever excited half so much whip-enthusiasm in the young charioteer as the footstool

harnessed to the rocking-chair. No boxes of bricks would amuse the street child so much as the oyster-shells with which he makes a grotto; he would not care half so much for a trap and ball as for his little "tip-cat" of wood, cut from a fire bundle; and he has no occasion to buy large marbles when the first heap of pebbles will find him in as many "boncers" as he wishes. You will seldom see these street children with dolls. They would not know what to do with them; for never having been nursed, fondled, dressed, or put to bed themselves, they are incompetent to exhibit the same attentions to sham infants. But they can set up ninepins of brickbats and broken bottles; and make carts of old saucepans to fill with rubbish and drag after them; and lay out bauquets of dirt, dressed in various fashions, upon services of bits of tile and crockery, and tureens of old shoes. And as all these things can be immediately replaced when broken, and excite no sorrow when lost, their state is, in this respect, rather to be envied than otherwise.

And so, leading a life of all holidays, and turning the great world into a playroom for his especial enjoyment, the street infant passes to the boy.

3.—THE BOYS, PROPERLY SO CALLED.

THE "boys" are as characteristic of our London streets as the *gamins* are of the quays and canal banks of Paris. Let us consider a general type of their class.

He hath eight years of existence to answer for. He weareth a paper cap, or a cloth one without a peak, set forward on his head, which he considereth knowiug. He standeth on his head with ease, and without apparent necessity to do so; and is outdone only by the sable musician of Ethiopia, whom the gallery honoureth by the name of "Boncs," in his handling the castanet bits of slate. He danceth to piano-organs, a measure not taught by any advertising professors; and, at times, waggishly turneth the handle himself, to the indignation of the Genoese performer. On being remonstrated with, he sparreth playfully at the foreigner, treateth his hat with insult by compressing it as though it were a French mechanical one, and then ruuneth away.

He loveth all street performances, but contributeth nothing to their support, albeit he taketh the front place. He followeth a fire-engine with ardour, and when nobody is looking, bloweth a lusty note through the metal hose-pipe; after which, he runneth to the opened water-plug, which he compresseth with his shoe, and causeth the stream to spirt over the passengers, which diver-

sion he concludeth by pushing the little brother of some other boy into it. And then he quarrelleth with the other boy, and saith, "I should like to see you do it!" But on neither side is anything ever done.

He loveth the freedom of shirt-sleeves, and doth not think an apron beneath him, so that he tucketh it up. He returneth speedy answers, intended to wound the feelings of those reproving him, and by this token it is dangerous to chaff him. He detecteth rapidly peculiarities in dress, and hath an ideal type, which he calleth "a swell out of luck." And he doth not think the question, "Does your mother know you're out?" at all worn out or *passé*, but still indulgeth in it, imagining thereby that he inflicteth a pang whose sharpness precludes reply. If he runneth against you, he will turn away reproof by saying first, "Now then, spooney! can't you see where you're drivin' on."

He hath the merit of being an indirect author of burlesques, albeit Blackwood did not formerly attack him thereon. For from him did Messrs. Planché, A'Beckett, Tom Taylor, Shirley Brooks, Brough, Talfourd, and another, with whom we are upon terms of great intimacy, borrow the lines and tunes which chiefly set the house in ecstasies. His whistle abroad (which, disguise it as they may, all composers covet) suggesteth the air that shall be encored above all others; his by-word of the day causeth the laugh which Mrs. Keeley, Miss P. Horton, and Miss Woolgar love to provoke; and, above all, his "Brayvo!" from the heights of the Haymarket, Lyceum, or Adelphi, chiefly inspiriteth both audience and actors. For he is no mean feature as connected with "the present state of the drama." His voice keepeth the scene-shifters to their duty; his call, from the gallery, of "Higher!" hath power to raise the very skies; and he even commandeth the great Charles Kean to "Speak up!" when contiguous noise drowneth the sound of that eminent voice. And he often dispelleth the *ennui* of the audience during the *entr'acte*, by making his dangerous journey along the front of the rails from one side of the house to the other, when he wisheth to exchange greetings with a half-price friend. He believeth that the whole orchestra is composed but of fiddlers, for he mentioneth them all as "catgut scrapers;" and he crieth out perpetually, throughout the entertainment, for "Bill Simmuns!" whom he expecteth to join him. He is anxious that everybody who is noisy, except himself, should be thrown over, or turned out; but he liketh the commandatory rather than the executive power. He hath a merit of discovering ephemeral horsemen and livery-stable nags with a quickness scarcely inferior to that of a turnpike-man; and if he detecteth in the equestrian

a nervous temperament, he calleth out, "You'd better get inside, sir!" or he kindly saith, "Mind his tail, sir, or else it'll be shook off!" or he facetiously recommends him "to lay hold tight by his ears." And to all coachmen he crieth, "Whip behind!" more especially when there is nothing to whip. Or he telleth John Thomas to "look sharp after his calves, or else they'll pull him off his perch!"

To coachmen, generally, he is a terror, and to none more than those who are waiting outside the theatres, half asleep upon their boxes, with their whips hanging over the pavement; for the thongs of these he tuggeth in succession, exclaiming, "My eyes! there's a bite!" as the lash flieth back, and possibly waketh the dozing Jehu with a cut across the face. And also by anglers at the Serpentine is he held in dread, inasmuch as he constantly recommendeth the fisherman to "Pull him up, sir!" when there is no necessity. Or he examineth the contents of the fish-kettle uninvited; or, if the bites do not arrive so quickly as he desireth, he maketh artificial ones by pelting at the float, thereby causing it to bob. And this hath been known to disturb the fish in no small measure, so that they incontinently depart to distant waters, and is, above all others, an intrusion which your angler cannot abide. But herein doth lie the boy's greatest pleasure.

4.—OF THE REASONABLE RATE AT WHICH THE BOY PROCURES HIS AMUSEMENTS.—OF HIS REFRESHMENTS.

THE sources of income of the boy are numerous, but, at the same time, the results are small; and so he is driven to patronize those sports and pastimes of the people of England which require the least outlay. His living is either earned or picked up. By the first, we mean that he may be in a regular place; but if he is detained in-doors many of his most striking characteristics are destroyed; for confinement to him is like a flower-pot to a forget-me-not. He must have air, and light, and water, and plenty of them, or he loses his richest attributes; and so, of the ways of living, he prefers the second. When you land at Huugerford, he is there, anxious to carry your carpet-bag the greatest possible distance for the smallest conceivable amount; or if you shoot a cab flying in the street, he opens the door, pushes you in, bangs it to again, and touches the place where his hat ought to be if he had one, before you know he is near you. He will run miles after your horse, even after saluting you as aforesaid, upon the chance of holding it; and were he certain that you would make a long call, he would endeavour to turn a few dishonest halfpence by

letting the aristocracy of his class have a short ride. But this is a species of money-making attended with some risk.

All these payments, however, are a long time making up the sum of sixpence; and when he gets this together, he goes to the play on a Monday evening, not caring how early he arrives, or how long he waits at the gallery door. Indeed, his patient expectation at this post appears to be part of the evening's entertainment: for he will cluster there with his fellows sometimes as early as half-past four. And spending his money in this way, he has none left for promiscuous diversions; and so he studies in what way the greatest amount of amusement can be procured for nothing, or, at least, next to it.

All street amusements, depending for support on the voluntary contributions of the bystanders, we have before observed, he liberally patronizes—with his presence; at times contributing to their effect by allowing the wandering necromancer to fasten the padlock on his cheek, or becoming the victim whose head is to be cut off the minute ninepence more is thrown into the ring, to make up the sum under which the decapitation, by some mysterious law of nature, cannot be performed. But in this respect the boy is pretty safe; for the ring resembles in some degree the toy of Tantalus's cup: you may throw hundreds of coppers into it, without ever getting the sum to rise above sevenpence-half-penny.

Generally speaking, all the enjoyments which those who have money purchase, the boy procures for nothing. He gets to the Derby by riding behind a number of vehicles, and chauging them, as he is successively whipped off. He sees an execution from a lamp-post, even obscuring the view of those wealthy amateurs in such matters, who have paid a high rent for the first floor of the Lamb coffee-house. The crater of Mount Vesuvius at the Surrey Zoological Gardens is sufficiently visible above the palings to allow him to enter into all the glories of the rockets and eruptions from the road; and he sees much more of Mr. Green in his balloon from the public road, than any of the company who paid for admission to behold what is termed "the process of filling"—consisting of the diverting application of a gas-pipe for several hours to a valve at the bottom of the huge looming machine in question, and not being a sight, in the abstract, provocative of great joy or merriment.

At fairs and festivals, it has long been received as a fact that the outside of the shows is the best part of their performance; and this the boy enjoys to the utmost. He sees all the actors, and then, if he chooses, he can hear the dialogue of the tragedy

and the comic song of the countryman, by listening at the side of the canvas theatre. He gets a ride in the merry-go-round, by contributing his share of communicated force to impel it, or responding to the master's commands of "Holler, boys!" and raising a shout of enthusiasm to light up a glow of ardour in the breasts of waverers, who are debating between the hobby-horse and the halfpenny. And he sometimes, even, is admitted to the grand arena of equitation, as a reward for forming one of the awkward squad which Mr. Merriman drills on the platform. At races, he lies down at the feet of the people at the ropes, and gets a better view than anybody else; and at reviews he comes off equally well by climbing a tree.

Whatever the boy does not spend at the theatre goes in things to eat. For his consumption are those remarkable penny ham-sandwiches chiefly manufactured, as well as the numerous unintelligible comestibles sold on the stalls which border the pavement. In fact, the kerb is his club, offering all the advantages of one of those institutions, without any subscription or ballot. Had he a few pence, he might dine equally well as at Blackwall, and with the same variety of delicacies, without going twenty yards either way from the pillars in St. Clement's churchyard. He might begin with a water *souchée* of eels, varying his fish course with pickled whelks, cold fried flounders, or periwinkles. Whitebait, to be sure, he would find a difficulty in procuring; but as the more cunning gourmands do not believe these delicacies to be fish at all, but merely little bits of light pie-crust fried in grease—and as, moreover, the brown bread-and-butter is, after all, the grand attraction—the boy might soon find a substitute. Then would come the potatoes, apparently giving out so much steam, that the can which contains them seems in momentary danger of blowing up; large, hot, mealy fellows, that prove how unfounded were the alarms of the bad crop-ites; and he might next have a course of boiled feet of some animal or another, which he would be certain to find in front of the gin-shop. Cyder-cup, perhaps he would not get; but there is "ginger-beer from the fountain at one penny per glass;" and instead of mulled claret, he could indulge in "hot elder cordial;" whilst for dessert, he could calculate upon all the delicacies of the season, from the salads at the corner of Wych Street, to the baked apples at Temple Bar. None of these things would cost more than a penny apiece, some of them would be under that sum; and since, as at Verey's and other foreign restaurateurs, there is no objection to your dividing the "portions," the boy might, if he felt inclined to give a dinner to a friend, get off under sixpence. There would be the digestive

advantage, too, of moving leisurely about from one course to another; and, above all, there would be no fees to waiters.

We believe that of late years the taste of the boy in the matter of street refreshments is altering for the better; and we are led to think so by the improvements which the travelling vendors of them are making in their establishments, and which now appeal to his artistic feelings rather than his idle curiosity. We remember the time when kidney-puddings—uninviting constructions of the size of small oranges—were sold in the New Cut; and the stalls were adorned with rude transparencies, to catch the eye of the boys. We recollect there was the courier of St. Petersburg riding six horses at once for a kidney-pudding—a small reward, it is true, after such a perilous journey, but characteristic of the contentment of the Russian Empire; and there was Richmond winning the kidney-pudding from Richard III. by single combat, the viand without doubt, being intended to typify England in general; and on another lantern was Mr. Grimaldi as clown, making a face, with a string of sausages hanging out of his pocket. The connexion of this with the subject was somewhat vague, unless it was intended to show him as he appeared after swallowing a kidney-pudding. If this was the case, the expression of his face was not favourable to the desire of following his example. But now all these things are gone: the vendor no longer makes a hole in the pudding with his little finger, and pours in something like lamp-oil and hot water shaken together, from a ginger-beer bottle. The stall is a portable kitchen in itself, with three elegant brass lamps at the top, in lieu of the paper lanterns: the kidney-puddings have yielded to entremets of a less ambiguous description. The neighbouring ginger-beer stand boasts elegant glass apparatus, and tumblers instead of mugs, and is even elaborately painted in arabesque patterns. One we saw, the other day, upon wheels, was green, and red, and gold; and on it was written “La Polka.” The general effect was good, but the analogy was difficult to trace. However, one thing is certain: the merchants have found that boys now bestow the greatest patronage upon the most elegant stalls, and ornament them accordingly. But of all these eating-stands, the chief favourite with the boys is the potato-can. They collect round it, as they would do on ’Change, and there talk over local matters, or discuss the affairs of the adjoining cab-stand, in which they are at times joined by the waterman, whom they respect—more so, perhaps, than they do the policeman; certainly more than they do the square-keeper, for him they especially delight to annoy. And they watch any of their fellows eating a potato with a curiosity

and an attention most remarkable, as if no two persons fed in the same manner, and they expected something strange or diverting to happen at every mouthful.

5.—OF THE FINAL DESTINATION OF THE BOYS.

WE believe that if birds or animals, who have been taken into private life, are again cast forth upon the world, their fellows directly insult—not to say pitch into—them in a cruel and heartless manner.

And it is so with the boys. The instant one of them is thrown into society—by which we mean some position above that of the mere errand-boy or printer's devil, in either of which situations he is still, to all intents and purposes, the *gamin* we have been describing—that instant he is turned into game for his late companions. If he is a "page," they will ask him "what he'll take for his jacket without the buttons?" If he is a doctor's boy, arrayed in that comical conventional costume which medical men put their lads into—that sad struggle to combine the groom, footman, tiger, page, and knife-cleaner all in one—they will, if he is in a gig, shout out, "Ullow, doctor!" after him, to the indignation of his master; and if he is on foot with the oilskin-covered basket, they will stop him, attempt to bonnet him, and insist on looking into it. And here it sometimes happens that, instead of draughts and mixtures, they will discover half-pounds of tea, eggs, or, indeed, mutton-chops, for one of the earliest maxims instilled into the mind of the doctor's boy is, never to go out without his basket. It looks professional, and gives neighbours the idea of extensive practice, whereas three draughts carried in the hand bear four-and-sixpence on the very face of them. If he turns his thoughts towards learning the art and mystery of a baker, they will rap on his basket as he carries it on his shoulder, or even go so far as to call him "Doughy;" or at night, when they see him down in the hot lighted cellars, underneath the places where the pavement is always dry when it rains, and the snow always thaws when it falls, they will say, "I say, Joc, how are you off for hallum?" or allude to "bones," and "sally moniac," and other popular prejudices. If he is a butcher, they do not insult him except at a great distance, or when he has got a heavy tray of meat that he cannot well put down. For they know that in this state he is pugnacious; and that, unlike his threats in the boy state of existence, if he says he will punch their heads he is pretty safe to do it.

We have done with the boys as they grow up, for then they

cease to be so, and we lose all interest in them. Few of their attributes remain; they become grave and dull; you would not recognize in the porter, the journeyman, or the carman, any of the eccentricities that marked their early career. The only positions in which their repartee remains of use to them, and is still cultivated, are those of omnibus cads, cab-drivers, and the touters at the pier-heads of rival steam-boat companies.



MISS PERKAPPLE AND THE GOTHICS' BALL.

MISS PERKAPPLE was the oldest young lady we ever knew; and we wager the world to a China orange—which are long odds, but which, at the same time, there is no possibility of settling, even if you lose, so they may always be laid with tranquillity—that if you had known her you would have thought the same. And we will even allow you to have lived amidst a legion of young old ladies, who had fallen back upon the calm of tracts and canaries, from the anxiety attendant upon man's insincerity.

Miss Perkapple's nose was sharp, and always got red in cold weather before any body else's; and she had very uncomfortable shoulders, with curious points and peaks about them unknown in popular social anatomy. She had also great evidence of collar-bone; and wore spectacles, with glasses of a light bluish tint; and she was accustomed to dress her hair in fanciful designs, the like of which had never been seen before—not even in the imaginative range that begins in the fashion books, and terminates on the waxen brows of hairdressers' dummies. From these it may be conceived by intelligent minds that Miss Perkapple was also literary.

Not that all literary characters are like her—very far from it. For some have white rounded shoulders; and some have finely chiseled profiles; and in others, nothing of red is remarkable in the features except where it ought to be—glowing on the lips and faintly flushing on the cheeks. And there is one sweet lady whose face you could gaze upon for ever, and marvel not that, between the beauty of her floating glittering eyes and glossy braided hair and rosy mouth, and that of the sweet thoughts she can give utterance to, there should be some close analogy.

But these are not Miss Perkapple's clique. For when we state that in addition to her other characteristics, she wore gloves, generally, without regard to temperature, with the tops of the fingers cut off, through which the real ones protruded, as though they had thrust themselves out to see what was going on, like caddis-worms; and was reported to have a fine ankle, which at times she needlessly exhibited on a footstool; and was a beautiful figure—not a bit made up—principally from the want of any *appui* for crinoline to rest upon,—when we whisper all this, it will be seen at once that Miss Perkapple belonged to the high-purposed, rather

than the popular, style of literature. So those of her class, acting on the same notion that framed the proverb, "The nearer the church the farther from Heaven," addict themselves to subjects of domestic family interest, dependent in no small measure upon that holy state, which they have not the most remote chance of ever knowing anything about.

Perhaps Miss Perkapple was a trifle more romantic than the majority of her co-potesses. She believed in Venice—in fact, she had a very great idea of Venice—and she had written a great many ballads to her gondolier. She had never been there; but she had a beautiful lithograph of the Grand Canal, from the title-page of a song; and a line engraving of the Piazza San Marco, cut from an Annual; and she had, moreover, read Cooper's "Bravo;" and had once seen the "Bottle Imp" acted in London with "its bright and glittering palaces;" so that she was quite qualified to address her gondolier whenever she chose. She was also much attached to Spain, and had written of Boleros and bull-fights; and spoke of Andalusian eyes, and the sparkling Guadalquivir, and rich Aragon blood; she never said much, however, about Spanish onions or Castile soap, they were too commercial to be romantic; and she touched but lightly upon Seville oranges. But she had a pair of castanets hung up in her room, which, by the way, she could not play; and in a corner of the *Fogthorpe Messenger* she had written various Spanish ballads, in which she called thirty-shilling sherry "her golden wine of Xeres," and alluded to "the Cid," and made some hazy mention of the "Alhambra;" though, from her knowledge of the latter place being somewhat vague, albeit she had never been there, she was very nearly putting her foot in it. But what she lacked in absolute acquaintance with Spain, she made up in enthusiasm.

It must not be presumed that Miss Perkapple always lived at Fogthorpe. She had friends in London, who occasionally asked her to stay with them, and took her about to literary *soirées* at institutions, and pointed out to her the popular writers of the day; and although they sometimes made slight mistakes, and whispered that Mr. Thackeray was M. Louis Blanc, and called Mr. Charles Kean Mr. Robson, and pointed out Sir Edwin Landseer as Mr. Alfred Crowquill, the funny gentleman; yet, as she was not undeceived at the time, these things made Miss Perkapple equally happy. Indeed, she was determined to enjoy everything; for she had got over her Christmas literary labours, and written a seasonable tale, called "The Frost on the Window-pane," after having turned the *Every-day Book* inside out to find some new winter subject, all the yule logs, wassail bowls, mistle-

toes, plum-puddings, holly boughs, new-year's days, and snows having been long used up.

The friends of Miss Perkapple were most respectable tailors. Not common tailors, understand; there was no shop with little wax boys at the door, and remarkable ready-made waistcoats labelled "The Thing!" in the window. They did not throw books into railway omnibuses, nor advertise poetically, nor publish small works of fiction pertaining to their calling; such as "The Walhalla of Waistcoats," or "The Paletot Palace," or "The Kingdom of Kerseymere." No. They had a quiet window with a wire gauze blind, on which their name alone appeared; and sometimes you would see a single pair of trousers—generally of a noisy check pattern—hanging over the blind aforesaid; and if you went in, there was Mr. Striggs, the principal, working problems on rolls of cloth with French chalk, and mighty scissors that looked more fitted to cut off the heads of pantaloons in a pantomime than to cut out their legs on a shop-board. There was a private entrance in the passage, too, fitted up with one of those irritable, snappish little brass knockers which always flourish on inner doors; and if you chanced to be inside when the postman attacked it from without, the sharp percussion would well-nigh make your heart leap up to your mouth—only such a start is anatomically impossible. We have hinted that the Striggses did all they could to render Miss Perkapple's visits agreeable; and they never made her more happy than when they announced to her their intention of taking her to the Gothics' Ball, which was a very gay ten-and-sixpenny affair at the Hanover Square Rooms, subject to such proper regulations as kept its visitors in the sphere of its conductors. For, as Paris had its Longchamps, so has London—or had—its Gothics; either being the fête of intelligent costumiers to exhibit those dresses which they wish to render most popular in the ensuing season.

The choosing of a wedding gown was not a matter of more difficulty than the choice of a costume was to Miss Perkapple when she decided to go. She wished to make a hit; she felt it due to her literary reputation to do so; albeit the *Fogthorpe Messenger* was not extensively read in town. And first she thought of going as the Comic Mnse, but there was nothing in the dress marked enough; and she did not like the notion of being obliged to lean against a column, with a mask in her hand, all the evening, to support the character; for, although there were two columns under the royal box well adapted for such a purpose, yet the attitude, however appropriate, might become monotonous after a time. So Thalia was discarded.

Miss Perkapple next thought of Sappho; but being somewhat fluttered at a few traditionary stories respecting the fair Lesbian, she decided it would not be proper: more especially as the common world will not always look at things in an artistic spirit; and as an artistic spirit, like charity, will cover any amount of impropriety, this is unfortunate. Then she thought of going *poudrée*, after some of the sketches from the Queen's ball in an old *Illustrated News*; but, although a white wig sets off a pretty face, it is fearfully trying to even one of ordinary mould; and spectacles of light blue tint don't improve the general effect. Her glass hinted this to Miss Perkapple very mildly, and the powder was abjured.

She ran over a variety of other costumes, including the cheap and popular one of the plaid scarf and Scotch bonnet, to typify any Highland lassie in general; the favourite Plantagenet tunic of pink cotton velvet trimmed with white rabbit skin; the Marquise, with the habit and whip. She knew that with a two-shilling tambourine an Esmeralda could be got up at a small expense, but her hair was not long enough to plait down her back; it would only make two little horns, and she mistrusted false tails. It would be so awkward if one was to come off! At last she remembered that her pinksatin dress might be turned to good account. It was a little *passé* to be sure, but deep flounces of black lace would hide its weak points, and she could go as a Spanish girl. She could also "support the character"—a conventional notion connected with fancy balls—with great effect; and quote her own Spanish poetry. How very nice!

The evening came at last, and Mr. Striggs, in tight red legs and pointed shoes; and Mr. J. Striggs, as a white mousquetaire; and Miss Striggs, after the Marie Antoinette of Madame Tussaud; together with Miss Perkapple, as the Cachucha, all got into a coach, followed by Mr. Spong, who paid attentions to Miss Striggs, and went all alone by himself in a Hansom's cab as a Crusader. With a beating heart she gave her ticket to the George the Second uoblemán at the door, and they then went up-stairs and entered the room.

"What enchantment!" said Miss Striggs, as the gay scene broke upon them.

Miss Perkapple replied, "How gorgeously brilliant! Don't speak to me."

And hereon Miss Perkapple fell into a poetic reverie, and thought of something for the *Fogthorpe Messenger*, beginning

"I pace the gay and glittering scene,
And feel thou art not there;"

and then she ran over, mentally, "queen, green," "between, mien"—that was good—"my altered mien:" having got which rhyme, she proceeded to build the line up to it, which is a safe plan in writing poetry—proceeding

"And shudder at my altered mien;"

and was going to finish with "and look of blank despair," when Mr. Striggs hoped she would stand up in a quadrille with him, just then forming. So she left the "Lines to ——" for a little while, and took her place.

The programme of the evening's dances was printed on a card, with places to pencil down the engagements. Perhaps it carried out the name of the ball better than any other of its components; for there were "Spauish dances," and "country dances," in the middle of the evening; and "polka quadrilles," and a "Cellarius waltz," and other Terpsichorean vagaries, which savour more of the dancing academy than the drawing-room. And some of the company bowed to their partners, and to the corners, when they began; and others, in the polka, did fandango figures, and launched into wild intricacies and attitudes.

To the Spanish dance Miss Perkapple looked anxiously forward. She was always very great in it; and as most old young ladies are indefatigable dancers, she calculated upon making an effect in her Cachucha costume; and when Mr. Striggs introduced her to a Spanish nobleman, who she learned was Don Cesar de Bazan, a thrill passed through her frame. She took his arm, and they wandered down-stairs for refreshment.

"Have you travelled this last autumn?" asked Miss Perkapple, with her most insinuating tones.

"I was from London two months," replied Don Cesar.

"In sunny Spain?" inquired the lady, softly, as she looked at the cavalier from his plumed hat to his boots. "Seville?"

"No; Rosherville," answered the Don.

Miss Perkapple, fortunately for her feelings, did not know where Rosherville was; and she would not show that she was ignorant. So she played with her coffee, lifting spoonfuls out of her cup to bale them in again.

"Your dress is charming," continued the lady; "so tasteful, so exact! Where did it come from?" And Miss Perkapple concluded that the sun of Madrid had gleamed upon it.

"It is from Nathan's," replied De Bazan. Miss Perkapple did not know in what department of Spain the *locale* was situated. "Your costume is also most characteristic," continued her companion, who had learned what it was from the pictures of Duvernay.

"I am glad you like it," answered Miss Perkapple; "a simple

thing, but correct in detail." And she advanced her foot a little way beyond the lowest lace flounce. "But I adore everything Spanish—don't you? Its eyes and mantillas——"

"Its onions and liquorice," said the Don.

"Playful fellow!" thought Miss Perkapple. "What a nice sense of the ludicrous he possesses! How cleverly he banters!—May I trouble you to put my cup down?" she added, aloud.

Don Cesar rose, and did as he was requested with infinite grace. Miss Perkapple was enchanted, and thought she had never before seen so efficient a stem for the tendrils of her young heart to cling to. His figure, his dark moustache, his air altogether, were perfect. "Can it be possible that I love again?" she thought. And then she sighed as she recollected the faithless editor of the *Fogthorpe Messenger*, who had printed all her poetry in the top left-hand corner of the last page, which he must have seen was addressed to himself; and all the time was courting the doctor's daughter, whom he ultimately married.

The Spanish dance was performed, and Miss Perkapple's share in its mazes was unequalled. Nobody else could come up to the spirit of her attitudes; she bounded forward in the true Andalusian fashion, and swung round her *vis-à-vis*, and beat audible time with her feet to call attention to them, and in the waltz pousette was especially great, turning her head alternately to the right and left as she went round; in fact, as a coarse-minded Polka nobleman observed, who was looking on, she was all legs and wings, like an untrussed chicken.

Supper came; and under the influence of the champagne, and lights, and feathers, and spangles, Miss Perkapple believed in all the fairy tales she had ever read; and she established a great flirtation with Don Cesar de Bazan, who engaged himself to her for all kinds of dances. For she was entertaining in her conversation, and the Don was at the same time somewhat overcome by her flattering speeches. And she introduced him to Miss Striggs, whilst she danced with the Crusader lover, and all went merry as a marriage-bell—if that announcement of the addition of two more victims to a popular delusion can be considered so. But though she was anxious to get the Don to dance the last quadrille on the programme with her, she could not prevail on him to stay. He must go, he said; he had business, great business of importance to transact before he retired to rest, and must tear himself away. Miss Perkapple admired him more than ever; what could he be? An attaché? or perhaps a literary gentleman on a newspaper, and that a London one!

The time for parting arrived; and when Don Cesar had wished

her adieu, Miss Perkapple enjoyed the revelry no more. She went up to the royal box, and gazing on the festive triflers below, thought how fleeting was happiness, and quoted some of Medora's lines to herself, until the last dance on the card arrived—the British Navy Quadrille—and the Striggses prepared to depart. Shawls were recovered, coaches called, and, in the cold grey of morning, amidst a mob of early risers who were loitering round the door to watch the company out, they drove away. Miss Perkapple thought but of one subject—the partner of the evening; and, with her eyes closed, pretended to be asleep as she conjured up his image before her. But she was aroused from her reverie by a laugh from Mr. Striggs, and a cheer in the streets, as if from boys, which somewhat startled her. Looking from the windows, a spectacle met her own pair that well-nigh brought on a fit of hysterics. They were in a West-end thoroughfare; and there, in front of a shop—a common normal grocer's shop—was Don Cesar de Bazan, as he appeared an hour previously, taking down the shutters to the delight of a crowd of boys on the pavement, who were madly dancing about him. Some unprovoked assault upon his cloak caused him to turn sharply round as the hackney-coach passed, and Miss Perkapple saw that he had only one moustache! The other had been danced off in the last polka, and was now lying on the floor of the Hauover Square Rooms; for he had trusted to composition instead of springs, which latter had set him so sneezing that he had well-nigh blown his head off before he came. As he turned, his eye caught Miss Perkapple's. Despite the cold air of morning he blushed crimson, and shot the shutter he held down a grating under the window with a precipitancy that looked as if he would have given worlds to have gone down after it; after which he rushed into the shop and disappeared behind a monster coffee-grinder, but whether he merely hid for the moment, or committed suicide by throwing himself into it, remained a mystery.

The spell had been too rudely broken, and Miss Perkapple saw that the secret of his anxiety to “leave the halls of dazzling light” was fully explained. She suppressed the cry that rose to her lips as well as she was able, and pulling her shawl over her head, at the great peril of her Cachucha comb, and the—shall we say it!—and the back plait attached to it, was alone in her misery. For Mr. Striggs had kindly gone in the cab by himself to let Mr. Spong ride with the beloved object of his heart, and of course they were only occupied with one another; and Mr. J. Striggs's white mousquetaire costume was too small for him, so that he had been in an ill temper all the evening, and scarcely

spoke to anybody, and therefore our heroine felt as only old young ladies can feel under such circumstances.

The discovery was cruel! Had she seen him reeling from the contiguous posada—it was a gin-shop in common language—followed by his brawling companions, it would have been something; or, if he had attacked one of the bulls who were going by on their way to Smithfield, it would still have been in character; despite the cold, she would have waved her handkerchief from the window in passing recognition. But shutters! dreary things only used to close shops, and carry accidents of unromantic character upon: her very soul revolted from the association. To be sure, even that would have been nothing in Madrid; but in London that was quite another thing. For the glamour of distance—both of time and space—that makes poetic temperaments conceive Swiss girls and vivandières to be beautiful creations, and invests prentices of the middle ages with more ennobling attributes than those of the present time, had great sway over Miss Perkapple.

The blow was never recovered. The next day Miss Perkapple looked forlorn and deserted; and when she did look so it was to a remarkable extent. Her friends put it down to fatigue: but she alone knew whence the chill upon her heart arose. London had lost all its charms for her; the Cachucha dress became a souvenir of bygone happiness, as mad brides, in affecting stories, gaze upon the faded orange-blossoms that tell of brighter hours. She retired early to her room, and began some touching "Stanzas for Music," but her spirits failed her, and, after another immature attempt at "The Spirit Weary: a Sonnet," she went to bed.

The day after that she left London. Her visit had a marked effect upon her writings. It is said that no author is worth half-a-crown a page until he has been in love or difficulties; and Miss Perkapple felt that for one bright evening in her life's gloom she had been the former. Hitherto she had, in the manner of her class, described hapless flirtations entirely from imagination—except that with the editor, which could scarcely be called one—creating her lovers on purpose to be deserted by them; but now her genius took a more decided turn. The *Fogthorpe Messenger* was, in consequence, a gainer thereby; and the Spanish ballads became a great feature in its columns, for they told so plaintively of wretched hopes and happier hours. Indeed, they are about to be collected for republication, by subscription, with a preface by Miss Perkapple, stating that "many of her friends—in this instance, she fears, too partial ones—have urged her to the venture." But she is at present undecided as to whether they shall be dedicated to "The Spanish Legion" or "The Memory of the Past."

MRS. CRUDDLE'S ANNUAL ATTACK.

EVERYBODY could not have lived where Mrs. Cruddle did. It was at the end of a court, that went out of a lane, that opened upon a street, that led into a great thoroughfare between St. Paul's and the river. It was, furthermore, in a locality that looked as if all the spare warehouses and private dwellings, left after London was finished, had been turned into a neighbourhood by themselves, without any regard to order; just as the dealers in old furniture make up cabinets and davenportes of any old scraps of plain and ornamental woodwork thrown aside by them after their great design has been achieved.

Her house, moreover, was difficult to arrive at. First of all, the very cabmen were slow at finding it out, never, according to the habits of their race, stopping to inquire of any one, but driving on and on and on, as if they expected some inherent instinct would ultimately show them, or their horses, where to stop. Next, if you walked and asked, your first hope, a pedestrian, would reply that he was a stranger in those parts, look wistfully around him as if he sought some index floating in the air, like the guiding hands in the "White Cat," and then pass on. Your second, a policeman, would keep you some minutes in suspense, and finish the interview by admitting that he had heard of the place, but confessing his ignorance of its exact whereabouts; and your final chance, a baker at the corner, would not be sure whether it was the third turning or the fourth. Lastly, if you found it out, your journey was all the way one of great terror, from the chances that the overhanging wheels of the huge waggons would grate you to death against the walls of the narrow footway, which was only a kerb; or that the mighty woolpacks and sugar hogsheads, that hung from the cranes high in air over this edging of pavement, would fall just as you were passing under, and knock your head into your stomach beyond all possible chance of recovery.

When, however, you arrived at Mrs. Cruddle's house, it was not lively. It seemed to be all back rooms, go into whichever one you would, even up at the top, except the very attic, whose windows opened upon a widely-extended thicket of chimney-pots, ultimately lost in the smoke they were giving out, or a falling and

rising prairie of roofs, reminding one of nothing but the view from a railway that runs into the heart of a great city. But here Mrs. Cruddle had lived for twenty years. We mention the lady more particularly than her husband, because his claims to be considered an actual resident were less decided, inasmuch as he was a "commercial gentleman," travelling for a wholesale druggist, and having as many homes—at all of which he was equally known and welcomed—as there were old commercial inns in principal towns in Great Britain. Mrs. Cruddle, however, could scarcely be considered a lone woman. Her house was always filled with lodgers—clerks from Doctors' Commons, boys from St. Paul's School, and young men from Paternoster Row; and to all of these, as well as to her own family, scattered about in various parts of the City, Mrs. Cruddle was a mother. But at one time of the year the domestic position of Mrs. Cruddle was considerably altered. Legal courts were closed, holidays arrived at the school, and even in Paternoster Row leaves of absence were granted between "magazine days;" so that the house became comparatively deserted. Mr. Cruddle returned from his travels; the tracts of chimney-pots became more extended in the clear air; theatres shut, and gardens opened; boats ran to Gravesend for sums that it would have been dangerous to have sold a bottle-imp for; and everything proclaimed that the lazy end of summer had arrived.

And with it came a complaint to which Mrs. Cruddle had long been subject. It was not cholera, nor influenza, nor anything else that "went about" to the great delight of the doctors. It did not depend upon states of the air, or sanitary neglect; nor was it like the potato disease, general, being in a measure confined to England. It was, in fact, the very reverse of the Swiss disease of over-love for the father-land, consisting in an irrepressible desire to get as far away from home as possible.

Mrs. Cruddle and her husband were such a happy couple, that she knew she had only to express her wish for a change of air to procure permission and the means forthwith. But this did not do. For some incomprehensible organization of her woman's disposition, a request and a ready acquiescence would have taken away all the pleasure of the trip. It was absolutely necessary that the suggestion should come from her husband, and that then light reasons should be given for its impracticability that year, and doubts urged as to its judiciousness. And to effect this, she would at this period get up a sort of monodrama, and perform it in a very truthful manner, commencing by complaining of the closeness of the rooms, untying her cap-strings, and opening all

the windows, as she hinted at the luxury of fresh air. Next she would envy Mrs. Saddler of Knightrider Street, and Mrs. Egg of Addle Hill, and the Drivers of Great Carter Lane, for that they had all gone somewhere in steam-boats, and were, perhaps, enjoying nice wet feet on the sands, or slipping off the green seaweed into the holes of the periwinkle rocks, at that very moment. And the number of minor diseases that attacked her, perfectly irreducible to any medical category, would have puzzled the British College of Health, whoever that gentleman may be. Into all these traps Mr. Cruddle would good-temperedly fall, in the same kind spirit in which you take the card which the conjuror evidently forces on you, instead of brutally drawing one from the undisplayed portion of the pack; so that at last Mrs. Cruddle, satisfied that the sea-air alone would do her good, prepared to put it to the test. Her husband readily acquiesced in everything, always excepting that he should be expected to go too, for all the time. He enjoyed the holiday much more, he said, when it only came once a week; and so he settled to breathe sea-air from Saturday until Monday, keeping in town all the rest of the time. It is true during this space he was seen about at resorts, dining at Blackwall, or going to Cremorne, with certain old friends of his, wags of the travellers' rooms; and these same friends would also, now and then, assemble at his house, upon the sly hint that "the broom was hung out," and smoke cigars in the drawing-room during a rubber of very long whist. But all this was very fair; and Mrs. Cruddle, even, could not be angry when she heard of it.

"And where do you think of going, my dear," said Mr. Cruddle to his partner, who, ever since the sojourn had been determined upon, appeared to have been engaged in learning Bradshaw by heart, all the way through, including cab-fares and advertisements. "Gravesend?"

"Now, Cruddle! Gravesend!" answered the lady, reproachfully. "Gravesend for sea-bathing! Why, it's nothing but brackish mud and shrimps' tails. Besides, a shilling there and back: what can you expect at such a price?"

"Well, Margate, then?"

"No, Cruddle, not Margate: no." And here Mrs. Cruddle made that kind of face which people do when they get the first sight of the black draught they are about to take. "No, the last bedstead I had there was quite enough for me. Ugh!"

"What was that, my dear?"

"Don't ask me—no: a perfect colony of them. I never shall forget Alfie saying he saw a little black ladybird on the pillow."

"Oh! that was it, was it?" replied Mr. Cruddle; "that's nothing at the sea-side, you know. You should see the fleas at Chester. Lor! he, he, he! We all used to laugh so." And the recollection of them appeared so diverting that Mr. Cruddle chuckled again. "Joe Robins used to say always when he got there, 'Now, Fanny,' he used to say, 'bring me the mouse-trap.' 'La! Mr. Robins,' Fanny used to say, 'what do you want with the mouse-trap?'—'What!' Joe always said, 'why, to catch the fleas with; to be sure!' And then how they used to laugh! Lor!"

And the mere reminiscence of the fun again threw Mr. Cruddle into such a state of hilarity that he forgot all about the subject of conversation, and, possibly, would not have reverted to it again if Mrs. Cruddle had not answered some imaginary question of her own by observing, "No, I never was so robbed as I was that August at Ramsgate. The moist sugar alone would keep me from ever going there again."

"Try Boulogne," suggested Mr. Cruddle, brought back to the topic. "It's very cheap, and uncommonly curious."

"France!" cried the lady. "My goodness gracious, Cruddle! What! to be made into a barriade, or blown out of your bedroom by artillery in the middle of the night, and then guillotined. I do declare I've thought of nothing but that room at Madame Tus-saud's ever since I saw it."

"Well, I'm sure I don't know, my dear," said Mr. Cruddle.

"Now, look here," continued his wife, turning over to Bradshaw, "'London and South Western'—that's it."

"'Cornelius Stovin, manager,'" read Mr. Cruddle. "Lor! what an odd name—Stove in! How it puts you in mind of a horse-box got on the wrong line, and the express coming up."

"Now don't, Cruddle!" exclaimed the other; you quite make one nervous. See here: 'London to Southampton, second class, ten-and-six.' Now then, turn to the boats, and read. There it is—'Southampton——,'"

"'Southampton to Bombay, on the 3rd of every——,'"

"No, no!—'to Ryde,' there it is; 'all day long.' Very convenient, isn't it? And the Isle of Wight is so very beautiful—I think it must be the Isle of Wight."

And the Isle of Wight was accordingly fixed on; and it was agreed that poor Miss Peers, who never had a holiday, and thought so much of going out, was to accompany Mrs. Cruddle on her tour.

Miss Peers was the useful friend of the Cruddle family—one of those available persons who can always come whenever they are

asked—which is usually when they are most wanted—and always look pleasant under the most trying domestic *contre-temps*. She could do everything. Her Tarragon vinegar was pronounced, by competent authorities, to be more than superior; and no one could manage short-crust in a floured cloth so successfully. She was artful with pink saucers, knew where peculiar tints of worsted could be procured at the cheapest rate, and understood tea-making to a marvel. If a servant was discharged hurriedly by Mrs. Cruddle, Miss Peers always knew of the very one to take her place. She possessed in her head a whole library of secrets respecting rough-dried linen, pickled onions, grape wine, plate powder, and clear-starching; and, the day after a party, knew where everything was to go back to, what was left, and how it was to be disposed of, better than the hostess herself. Hence she was a great treasure—a real blessing to a mother like Mrs. Cruddle; and as Mrs. Cruddle never had time to read anything, and Miss Peers—who was suspected of shaving her forehead to bring out her intellect—took in, or borrowed, all the cheap periodicals, and retailed their contents during the stringing of a cullender of French beans, or the repairing of a basket of the infant Cruddle's socks, she was as entertaining as useful. Besides which, she was a great favourite with little Alf, who was to accompany his mother.

We pass over intermediate matters—how the strange parcel of umbrellas, cloaks, and spades of former years, for the sand industry of little Alf, quite astonished the guards on the railway; how they met a poor gentleman who had heedlessly got into the wrong train, meaning to go to Richmond, and had been whirled down to Woking before he found it out, both starting at the same hour, and being in reality a reputable and harmless man, had been looked upon as a swindler, made to pay excess fare, and kept out of a lucrative commission; how they enjoyed the sea-trip, and Mrs. Cruddle declared she was a capital sailor, and so was little Alf, and Miss Peers too—Southampton Water and the Solent being as smooth as glass; and how Miss Peers showed Mrs. Cruddle Netley Abbey and Calshot Castle, the first of which she had seen in some dissolving views at the Polytechnic, and the last in a pocket-book, as well as at the top of an illustrated sheet of note-paper sent very appropriately from the Mile-end Road. How they landed ultimately at Ryde, and found that Portsmouth would have been their proper line—but had been overlooked in a vague conventional reminiscence of the coaching days—also formed a feature in the trip. But we omit all its detail, and plant our party at Ventnor on the same evening, after having

crossed the island in, possibly, the only stage-coach left in England.

"Well, I declare the sea-air makes me feel better already," observed Mrs. Cruddle, looking upon her present condition of perfect health as a remarkable cure; "and I never saw a child eat as Alfie did at tea. There's nothing like it."

Mrs. Cruddle made this remark to Miss Peers as they started from the inn to look after lodgings. Miss Peers entirely coincided with the assertion, forgetting that little Alfie had made but an indifferent dinner on the railway from a dry sandwich, with nothing to drink; and that this night, in some degree, account for the quantity of shrimps he had devoured, and the number of times he had been choked by their heads and tails.

There were many lodgings to let, but none that suited. Some were too dear, and others too dirty; and at all Mrs. Cruddle persisted in tasting the water, and telling a story of a friend of her husband's who turned light blue through drinking from a chalybeate pump constantly, and always got rusty in damp weather afterwards. The search would have tired many people, but Mrs. Cruddle was never so happy as when she was routing about after apartments with no idea of where she would ultimately go to bed that night. And of course Miss Peers was happy, too; and little Alfie, being lured on from one to the other, under false promises of digging sand that very night, was equally contented.

At last, quite at the end of the village, they found what they wanted. It was a comical little house, something between a Swiss cottage and a donjon keep, with a flagstaff at the door, and two wooden cannon on the roof, to which access could be obtained. This much delighted Miss Peers, as from it she could watch from the lonely tower, and see the rovers' barques in the distance, with other romantic pleasures. And, perhaps, the landlord might be a bold buccaneer! It was charming.

There was everything they wanted. A sitting-room and two bedrooms, one of which, looking towards the beach, was appropriated to Miss Peers, because she loved to hear the ocean's murmur. Little Alfie had a sofa, since it was his custom to go to sleep upon his hands and knees, with his head burrowing in the pillow, which, although agreeable to himself, was less pleasant to a bedfellow. There were no carpets, but, as Mrs. Cruddle said, that made the room more airy, and air was everything at the sea-side: and the furniture was singular and scanty, which contented Miss Peers declared was half the charm of a lodging. So that it was all just as if it was made for them; and so cheap, too, they could scarcely understand it.

Of course there was nothing in the house. There never is at lodgings; and it is wonderful to think how the real natives live without salt, vinegar, potatoes, or any other of the inevitable articles of consumption, the existence of which is always so calmly denied, if they are asked, unless the lodgers procure their own. There was not even a bit of bread for Alf, so Miss Peers started forth to procure comestibles, leaving Mrs. Cruddle to unpack the boxes, which, having done, she sat down to look around her. There was a curious air of desolation in the rooms. Everything appeared to have been carried off except the barest necessities. There were nails for pictures, but none suspended therefrom; and rods and hooks for curtains, but none attached. The only well-stocked part of the room was the mantelpiece, and this was covered with bottles of sand, vases of seaweed, trifles from Shanklin, cockle pincushions, shell dolls, and cats made of putty and periwinkles—articles interesting from association, but of small intrinsic value. When Miss Peers returned and they wanted something warm, there was no fire; and when they wanted the fire, there were no coals. But Mrs. Cruddle was not put out; she said they had come suddenly, so they could not expect to find everything as at home, and, after all, health was the greatest blessing. Upon which they fell back upon cracknels and cold weak brandy-and-water, giving Alf a little in a glass egg-cup; for there were no wine-glasses in the house.

However, they slept very soundly. Had they not been tired with the journey, the constant murmur of talk that went on in the kitchen nearly all night would have disturbed them, and induced much speculation upon its import. But once off, their slumber endured until morning. Mrs. Cruddle dreamt that her husband came down on Sunday and brought a dozen friends with him, and that they had nothing for dinner but one duck. Little Alf fancied he had dug such a large hole in the sand that he tumbled into it, which awoke him with a start; and Miss Peers's visions were of becoming the bride of a bold buccaneer, more or less Grecian in appearance, varied with notions of being a mermaid in coral submarine caves, where lobsters and home-made pickled salmon could be had for the mere trouble of catching.

Very bright and beautiful was the next morning, when the ladies first looked from their windows—lovely as the first fine morning at the sea-side always is to a Londoner. Not a cloud was to be seen in the blue sky, except a few white mists which occasionally rolled across the summits of the more lofty hills. In some places the downs were covered with small white dots, which a closer inspection would have proved to have been sheep; in

others, with long, sloping wheat-fields, which, as the wind came, waved gracefully in thousand billows, revealing the corn-flowers, and bright, intruding poppies growing over them. Cockney architecture had been lavished on the village, but it could not destroy the beauty of the undercliff; and seaward the tide splashed its sparkling foam upon the rocks and pebbles of the beach, with a sound perfectly musical. Mrs. Cruddle pronounced herself better than ever she had been in her life, breathing, indeed, with the greatest ease; and Miss Peers's was equally salubrious; whilst Alf's appetite astonished them both as much as the traditional Jack's did the easily-imposed-upon giant, whose hospitality was so craftily taken advantage of at breakfast. They settled to go out directly after the meal and market—it was a sin to lose an instant of such lovely weather—and, accordingly, off they started. But, upon their return, they found the door of the house fast closed; and Mrs. Grit, the landlady, looking out of the first-floor window in great apparent anxiety, increased as she saw them approach.

"Just wait one minute—only a minute, ladies," said Mrs. Grit. "I am very sorry to keep you, but it can't be helped."

Mrs. Cruddle and Miss Peers looked at the landlady and then at each other, rather bewildered.

"I want my spade!" ejaculated Alf.

"A low, sneaking fellow!" continued Mrs. Grit, watching the retreating form of the man. "It will be quite safe directly, ladies," she added to her lodgers.

"Mamma, you said I might go on the sand as soon as you had bought the mutton-chops," Alf went on.

"Now then, ladies—now then!" cried Mrs. Grit, hurriedly, as she disappeared from the window. "But please make haste."

"What can this mean?" thought Mrs. Cruddle and Miss Peers.

"That's the way to the sand," said Alf; "and I know there's periwinkles, and starfish, and little crabs, like there was at Margate."

The door was here opened a little way as Mrs. Grit looked out. Then she allowed the party to enter, as soon as she was satisfied that they had not changed places with anybody else; and, finally, she slammed the door again, with nervous haste, and shot the bolt.

"The beggars are abominable," said Mrs. Grit, when the feeling of security was re-established: "so unpleasant, too, for you ladies to be kept waiting. But it is not my fault."

From the imperfect view obtained of the man who had departed

as they came up, Mrs. Cruddle did not think that he looked very like a beggar. He was florid and hearty, well clad, and carried a walking-stick.

"I cannot understand this at all," she said to Miss Peers, as they entered their sitting-room.

"I think there must be smuggling going on; if so, the French brandy is remarkably good for cherries," replied the other lady, in whose mind romance and domestic economy were ever mingled. "A smuggler—dear me! I wish I had taken more notice of him."

"Once I went on the sands directly after breakfast," hinted Alf, "and was so good all day afterwards."

But the suggestion was unattended to in the curiosity of the minute.

Anon new matter for wonder arose. The butcher's boy arrived with some meat that had been ordered, and instead of delivering it in at the door, in the ordinary method, was told by Mrs. Grit to wait until she got a long piece of string, by which the shoulder of lamb was pulled up to the bedroom window. And then, as little Alf still kept indulging in illusions of the sea-coast, it was thought proper to indulge him. But just as they were about to start, Mrs. Grit put herself before the door, in the attitude of a stage heroine, who declares that if anybody attempts to pass it shall be over her dead body, and implored them to wait a minute.

"He is here!" she exclaimed, but almost in a whisper. "It is not safe just now—pray wait a minute, ladies."

Mrs. Cruddle grew still more astonished. As for Miss Peers, she at once put down the object of alarm as a sea-Chartist, or something equally terrible. Every attempt to procure a tranquil explanation from Mrs. Grit was a failure. She only replied that she was a wretched woman, but that they should one day know all: and then, beckoning them to the back of the house, opened the kitchen door, after a cautious survey through the window, almost pushed them out, and banged it to, as before, after them. Under these mysterious circumstances the walk was not agreeable; and although little Alf was in high spirits, and heaped up shingles, dug holes, collected marine trash, and got his feet wet after the most approved fashion, and in a way that would, at another time, have called forth the highest encomiums, Mrs. Cruddle and Miss Peers had a cloud hanging over them which prevented them from fully entering into the spirit of his diversions. Their return was attended with still greater unpleasantness. They were not admitted for half-an-hour, and then in a hurried

manner by a French window, just as the mysterious stranger appeared round the corner of the house. All this was so bad, that Mrs. Cruddle determined to leave the place the next morning. Even the few hours of it, she said, were beginning to undermine her health.

The afternoon passed very uncomfortably, and at last they went to bed, sleeping less readily than on the preceding evening, but towards morning falling into a deep slumber. From this Miss Peers was awakened by a noise in her room, and, opening her eyes, she observed, to her horror, that the dreaded man had opened her window, which she had neglected to fasten, and stepped into her chamber. He now stood at the foot of the bed.

"Who are you? Go away! What do you want, man?" cried Miss Peers, with a ringing scream.

"Don't be afraid, ma'am, it's an execution," replied the intruder.

"A what!" shrieked Miss Peers; and by this time her cries had brought Mrs. Cruddle into the room, who nearly fainted. She had caught the man's word, and expected nothing else but that everybody was to be put out of the way immediately.

"I'm sorry to intrude," continued the man; "but don't distress yourselves now. Only I'm in possession now, that's all."

"Oh!" gasped the ladies; Mrs. Cruddle having wrapped her form in the bed-curtain, and Miss Peers pulled the counterpane up to her very eyes.

The truth dawned upon them. They saw that the miserable state of the house was owing to everything available having been sold, and that their difficulty of egress and entry was accounted for by the presence of the man.

"Leave the room!" cried Mrs. Cruddle. "Leave the room, and let us pack up our things at once, and go. Well—I'm sure!"

"Beg your pardon, ladies," said the man; "but you can't move a thing. I'm in possession."

"But everything you see is ours—these boxes, and clothes, and linen even."

"Very sorry, ma'am," said the man; "but you mustn't touch 'em. They all belong to me."

Mrs. Cruddle uttered a cry of despair, and threw herself upon the reclining form of Miss Peers. Little Alfie heard the noise, and came in, joining his screams to the confusion, as he clung to his mother. The *tableau* of horror—helpless, crushing horror—was complete.

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The straits to which the unfortunate ladies were reduced, how they could not even get a pocket-handkerchief, how they did not dare to write to Mr. Cruddle, and how he arrived on Saturday in the middle of it, will be detailed to anybody who passes the house at Ventnor, and may care to call. But Mrs. Cruddle is supposed to be cured. As violent remedies at times put a stop to long-standing diseases, this terrible adventure is supposed to have annihilated her marine propensities. At all events, she confidently told Miss Peers, on the evening of their return to the court in London, that "there was nothing like home after all."



MR. GRUBBE'S NIGHT WITH MEMNON

IN the far west of London—preserving many traces of its original characteristics, amidst the wide expanse of architectural innovations which are continually springing up around it—there is a sober and antiquated, but withal respectable, locality, known to those travellers whose enterprise has led them thus far into the occidental suburbs, as Brompton. It is a district principally inhabited by theatricals, literati, and small annuitants; and is much esteemed on account of the salubrity of its climate, the mildness of its society, and the economy of its household arrangements. Its chief natural curiosities are tea parties and old ladies; and its overland journey to London is performed in omnibuses, unless the route by water is preferred. But this is somewhat circuitous—Cadogan Pier, which is the nearest port, standing in the same relation to Brompton as Civita Vecchia does to Rome.

Mr. Withers Grubbe, who was an old inhabitant of this pleasant village, resided in a modest tenement situate at the edge of the great Fulham Road. His establishment comprised himself and his housekeeper—a staid woman of matronly appearance—from which circumstance it may be fairly presumed that he was either a widower or a bachelor; but the uncertainty as to which of these two orders of single life he came under will be quite removed when we state that he was an antiquary, an entomologist, and a general natural philosopher, somewhat resembling a cocoa-nut—being shrivelled in external appearance, but possessing a good heart or kernel, and not entirely destitute of the milk of human kindness. As his favourite pursuits had been, from time immemorial, at variance with matrimony, he had never taken unto himself a wife. Once, and once only, did his friends speak of his falling in love. It was in the Park, one bright frosty morning, when he saw a lady, whose cloak somewhat resembled the delicate tintings of the privet moth; but this lepidopterous attachment was very transient, and the next chrysalis of the Sphinx Atropos, or number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* that came to hand, immediately banished it from his mind. And he was an occasional correspondent to the afore-named humorous publication. He had sent them a drawing of the old key of his dust-bin, and a dissertation upon several worn-out brass button-tops he had from time to time picked up in his

walks, believing them to be ancient coins; as well as a plan of the Roman encampment on the Birmingham Railway, and other interesting articles, the majority of which were "declined with thanks," by the venerable and undying Mr. Urban. He belonged almost to most of the learned and scientific bodies, to all of whom he read the rejected contributions, so that his time was pretty well occupied, and more especially in the spring; for then his *larvæ* and *aureliæ* broke forth into a new life, and there was such a buzzing, and fluttering, and pinning, and labelling, all over the house, with intrusive butterflies getting into the bedrooms, and strange caterpillars walking up and down stairs, that people of ordinary nerves, and uninterested in insect architecture, were afraid to go into the house. But he cherished all his living things with singular affection, even to the moths which had fattened on his waistcoats, and the cockroaches which ran about his kitchen; although Mrs. Weston, the housekeeper, could never understand that the former insects only did any mischief in their first stage of existence, and that the latter were looked upon as sacred things, from the high veneration they were held in amongst the ancient Egyptians. The poor ignorant woman, in the darkness of her intellect, classed them as "warmint."

The great aim of Mr. Grubbe's labours was to get up some paper that should produce a striking sensation in the learned world by the novel facts that it might disclose—a consummation which had never yet arrived, for his most interesting discoveries had always been forestalled. To this great end did he consume his midnight patent stearine; for this did he burn holes in all his carpets with the contents of his galvanic battery, and get phosphorus under his nails, or take all the colour from his table-covers, in prosecuting this endeavour, by rubbing his buffer of black-lead over cartridge paper, laid upon engraved stones and brass tablets to take the impression, was he three times apprehended for Swing, and once for sacrilege. But hitherto he had never produced any extraordinary impression beyond that which his appearance created with the rustics; and although he was a walking catalogue of the British Museum—far more copious and elaborate than those hired by country visitors at contiguous fishmongers' and public-houses—he found every object therein had been so often and so minutely described, that nothing fresh was left to dilate upon. And this opinion for a time subdued his energy, until one evening he was present at the unrolling of a mummy. He listened with intense attention to the remarks of the lecturer, and envied him the proud position he was for the time placed in, as the descriptive link between the present and the long-past epochs. But when the cere-

mony was finished, and Mr. Grubbe found, upon reviewing the lecture, that our acquaintance with the ancient Egyptians extended just far enough to show that we knew nothing at all about them, a fresh chain of research presented itself to his mind, and from that time every other pursuit was merged in the depths of the Great Pyramid, or perched upon the edge of Belzoni's sarcophagus. He made a mummy of his favourite cat, called his abode Sphinx Cottage, and allowed the kitchen to swarm with cockroaches—which he called *scarabæi*, and Mrs. Weston "black beads"—more than ever.

Things stood thus when, one sultry July morning, a learned friend called to beg his company in a visit to the docks, to view some wonderful organic remains, not yet landed, which a ship had brought from a distant country. Mr. Grubbe immediately prepared for the excursion; and after having drawn an odd pair of boots upon the wrong legs in his absence of mind, as well as omitted to take off his duffel dressing-gown, he gave himself up to the care of Mrs. Weston, who finally pronounced him fit to appear in the public streets. He accordingly started with his friend, taking the omnibus to the Bank, whence they proceeded to the docks on foot, saving the other sixpence; and beguiling the journey with many curious arguments and opinions upon ichthyosauri and blue lias clay.

The inspection of the fossils was most satisfactory, and they were pronounced highly interesting—the more so because several of them were perfectly incomprehensible; and notwithstanding the confined and heated places in which they were stowed, Mr. Grubbe poked about amongst the packing-cases, covered with dust and perspiration, and dragging his friend after him, until every available object had been investigated, and they emerged from the hold into the free air. A fresh treat now awaited him. His friend was attached to everything old equally with himself, and old wine possessed no insignificant share of his affections. With praiseworthy foresight he had provided a tasting-order as a crowning finish to their excursion; and having raised Mr. Grubbe's curiosity by mysterious hints of pipes and casks that had long slumbered in cool excavations below the level of the Thames, and wine more generous, oily, and sparkling than ever came into the dealers' hands, they were not long in providing themselves with inches of candle in split laths, and following their guide—a priest of Bacehus in high-lows and corduroys—into the bowels of the docks. How long they lingered therein we are ashamed to state; nor will we tell the world too ruthlessly how many casks were broached by the relentless gimlet; how the wine leaped bright

and creaming from the wood; how the glasses held twice the ordinary quantity, and how they were even rinsed out with claret and Madeira, which was thrown about amongst the sawdust like water. Neither will we betray the number of samples tasted by the visitors, nor do more than just hint at Mr. Grubbe's slapping the cellarman on the back for a good fellow, and endeavouring to strike up an ancient bacchanalian melody sung by Dignum in his young days. We only know that this subterranean sojourn was protracted to a period we blush to chronicle, delayed, no doubt, by a learned disquisition, poured forth by Mr. Grubbe, upon the home-made wines of Thebes, which ended just as they got to the top of the staircase, and stood once more, blinking and confused, in the glaring sunshine of a July afternoon. And terrible was the effect of the warm atmosphere upon their temperaments before a few minutes had passed. Whiz-z-z-z-z went their eyes and brains together; the ships flew round and round like the revolving boats at Greenwich fair, and the warehouses heaved and rolled as the billows of the sea. It was with great difficulty, amidst this general *bouleversement* of surrounding objects, that the two men of science staggered to the gate, and deposited themselves in the first omnibus that passed. They had not particularly inquired in what direction it was going; and, in consequence, after much travelling, Mr. Grubbe was somewhat surprised to find the vehicle stop in the Tottenham Court Road, when he expected to be at the White Horse Cellar. But he was in the humour for treating every mishap that might have occurred with exceeding levity; and finding that the locality suited his friend just as well, even better than Piccadilly, he wished him good-bye very affectionately, and took advantage of its proximity to pay a visit to his favourite British Museum, partly in the belief that its cool tranquillity would allay his cerebral excitement.

He left his inseparable gingham umbrella—which answers the double purpose of keeping off the rain when open, and serving as a portmanteau of collected curiosities when shut—with the porter upon entering; and then turned his steps towards the Egyptian Gallery, which was his usual lounge, still cherishing some vague notion that his skull had turned into a bag of hydrogen, so elastic and vivacious was his step. There were, as usual, a great many people gaping about and asking foolish questions of the attendant; some mixing up the Sphinx with the fossils they had seen, and asking if it ever was alive; others feeling rather afraid of going too near the mummies by themselves; and the others lost in mental arguments as to whether the colossal fist of red granite was a thunderbolt or the hand of a petrified giant; together with a great

many ill-conducted little boys, with no veneration for antiquities, who laughed at the different objects as they would have done at any of Mr. W. Bradwell's wondrous creations in pantomime. Heedless of the visitors, Mr. Grubbe was soon lost in mighty speculations upon the mysterious productions by which he was surrounded; and so continued until the constant shuffling of feet and increasing influx of strangers, whose inane remarks grated upon his learned ears, drove him from the block upon which he was sitting to some more remote corner of the gallery. Ensnaring himself in a recess behind one of the enormous heads, and screened by a sarcophagus, he fell into a fresh train of intense thought upon hieroglyphics in general, and those of mummies in particular. To this succeeded a confused picture of wine-vaults, pyramids, docks, claret-casks, and megatheria; and finally, overcome by the influence of heat, fatigue, and the tasting order, he fell fast asleep.

How long he slumbered remains to this day a mystery, and probably ever will be so. But when he awoke, all was still and quiet as the interior of the Theban tombs; the gallery was entirely deserted, and the moon was pouring a flood of light through the windows, which fell upon the statues and remains, rendering them still more cold and ghastly. In an instant the truth broke upon the unhappy antiquary: he had been overlooked when the Museum was cleared at seven o'clock, and was locked in—bolted, barred, almost hermetically shut up in the gallery, in the most remote part of the building, with nothing but stony monsters and crumbling mortality for his associates! Chilled to the heart with terror, despair, and the reaction of his previous excitement, he started from his corner with the intention of trying the doors, when his movement was arrested by the chime of a clock. He knew the sound well: it was the bell of St. George's Bloomsbury, and it proclaimed the hour of twelve! And he was there alone—alone, at midnight, in the Egyptian chamber of the British Museum. In a frenzy of terror he rushed towards the large doors, in the hope of finding them open; but they were fast closed, and he rattled the handles until the whole building rang again with the echoes. Hark! what was that sound? The echo had died away, and was now renewed, although he had desisted from his impotent attempts to gain some mode of egress. It sounded from above, and now came nearer and nearer, louder and louder, like the deadened and regular beat of muffled drums. There were footsteps, too—he could plainly distinguish them, in audible progression, coming down-stairs, and now a fearful spectacle met his horrified gaze. The immense marble scarabæus on the floor of the gallery vibrated with incipient animation; and then it stretched forth its

huge feelers, and opened its massy wings, like a newly-born insect trying the properties of its novel limbs; and next, with the heavy cumbrous motion of a tortoise, it crept across the floor, throwing back the moonbeams from its polished surface, towards the principal entrance of the gallery. Tramp, tramp, tramp,—onward came the noise, as of a great assembly, the drums still keeping up their monotonous accompaniment, and at last they approached close to the door, which quivered immediately afterwards with three loud knocks upon its panels from without. As the hapless Mr. Grubbe shrank still further into the recess, the large beetle scuffled nearer the door, and then raising one of its hideous feelers it turned the handle. The gigantic granite first moved by itself towards the entrance, and repeated the signal on the panels; and, at the last blow, a sound like the low rumbling of thunder echoed through the edifice, and the door flew open, admitting a glare of purple light that for a few moments blinded the terrified intruder, whilst on either side the Memnon and the Sphinx retreated back against the wall, to allow room for the dismal *cortège* that approached.

The whole collection of mummy-cases in the rooms above had given up their inmates, who now glided down the staircase, one after another, to join their ancient compatriots of the gallery below, lifting up the covers of their painted tombs, and stretching out their pitched and blackened arms to welcome them. And next, the curious monsters with the birds' heads, who up to this moment had remained patiently sitting against the side of the room with their hands upon their knees, rose courteously to salute their visitors. The light which filled the apartment, although proceeding from no visible point, grew brighter and brighter, until it assumed the brilliancy of oxy-hydrogen, and when the last of the dusty and bandaged guests had arrived, the doors closed violently, and the orgies began. The figures in the pictures became animated and descended from the tablets, being by far the most attractive portion of the company, either male or female, as they were semblances of life, bearing amphoræ of the choicest wine from the vineyards of Memphis; strange birds in long striped tunics, and stranger creations, whose shapes inherited an attribute of every class of the animal kingdom, acted as attendants, and obsequiously waited upon the superior deities; whilst the great feature of the gallery—the mystic, awe-inspiring Memnon—moved in stately progress to the end of the room, and commenced pouring forth that wondrous harmony with which at sunrise and twilight he welcomes his early worshippers. Then commenced an unearthly *galopade*—a dreary carnival of the dead, to the music of their

master, accompanied by the strange sounds of instruments brought by the mummies most inclined to conviviality from the glass cases up-stairs. But the strangest sight in the whole spectacle was the curious way in which Mr. Grubbe, despite his fears, perceived that they mingled ancient with modern manners when the dance came to an end. Some of the animated Egyptians betook themselves to pipes and beer; others brought large *aërolites* from the different rooms, and began to play at nincpins with the inferior household gods of blue glazed clay; one young Memphian even went so far as to thrust an enormous hook, as big as an anchor, through the body of the scarabæus, and then spin him at the end of a rope round the room; and finally, they wheeled a sarcophagus into the centre of the gallery, and filed it with what Mr. Grubbe's nose told him was excellent mixed punch, which they tipped until the eyes of Memnon twinkled with conviviality, as he snuffed up the goodly aroma; and at length, forgetting his dignity altogether, volunteered to play the Aurora waltzes (in compliment, of course, to his mother) out of his head. The monumental punch-bowl was directly pushed on one side, and they began to dance again, Mr. Grubbe getting gradually more and more excited by the music, until, unable to contain himself any longer, he rushed from his recess, and seizing a fair young daughter of the Nile round the waist, was in an instant whirling round in the throng of deities, mummies, hieroglyphics, ibises, and anomalous creations, which composed the assembly. The hours flew along like joyous minutes, and still the unearthly waltz was continued with persisting energy, until Mr. Grubbe's brain became giddy and bewildered. His strength also began to fail, in spite of the attractions of his young Memphienne, whose soft downy cheeks, roguish kissable lips, and supernaturally sparkling eyes, had for a time made him forget his age. He requested her to stop in their wild gyrations, but she heeded him not; breathless and exhausted, he was pulled round and round, whilst the Memnonian orchestra played itself louder and louder, until at length, losing all power, he fell down in the midst of the dancers. Twenty others, who had been twirling onwards, not perceiving their prostrate companion, immediately lost their footing; and finally, the whole assembly, like so many bent cards, giddy with wine and excitement, bundled one over the other, the unfortunate antiquary being the undermost of the party. In vain he struggled to be free—each moment the pressure of the superincumbent Egyptians increased; until, in a last extremity—unable to breathe, bruised by their legs and arms, and half-suffocated with mummy-dust—he gave a few fruitless gasps for air, and then became insensible.

It was broad daylight when he once more opened his eyes, and

the notes were dancing in the bright morning sunbeams that darted into the gallery. There were sounds of life and motion, too, on every side (although no one had as yet entered the apartment), and the rumble of distant vehicles in the streets. It was some little time before Mr. Grubbe could collect his ideas, for his brain was still slightly clouded—his lips also were parched, and his eyeballs smarting with the revelry of the night. But there he still was, in the room, surrounded by his late company, although they had now resumed their usual situations; the Memnon and the Sphinx were *vis-à-vis*, and the scarabæus in his customary place, as cold and inanimate as ever; whilst the gigantic fist had once more taken possession of its pedestal, and the gentlemen with the curious heads were sitting with their hands upon their knees in their wonted gravity. But, notwithstanding all this chill reality, the antiquary's mind was in a tumult of excitement. The dim undying magic of ancient Egypt was still in force, unconquered by time or distance. He had been admitted to the orgies of Memnon; he had watched the revelries and manners of the hitherto mysterious race; above all, he had gleaned information for a paper that would bring the Society of Antiquaries at his feet in wondrous veneration!

The doors were, ere long, thrown open, and Mr. Grubbe left the gallery unnoticed. On arriving at Brompton, he found Mrs. Weston in a state of extreme terror and exhaustion, having watched the whole night for her master's return, that worthy gentlemau never having passed so long a period from home. He retired immediately to his study, and laboured until dusk with unceasing industry; and from that period Egypt alone occupied his thoughts. He thought of nothing else by day, and dreamed of that subject only at night. The subject grew beneath his hands and ideas, and what with the circumstances he imagined, and those he dreamed about—for in his labours he ever confounded them together—the work is still unfinished; and he will not give it to the world in an imperfect condition, although his most intimate friends already fear that his application is affecting his brain. But when his task is concluded, great will be his triumph: he will have furnished—at least, such is his expectation—a key to all the mystic customs of the early Nile; the hidden lore of Memphis will be unravelled to the million; he will walk abroad a thing for men to gaze at and reverence; and his name will go down to posterity in company with Memnon and the great Pyramid.

These are his own anticipations. His intimate friends have only one hope—that he will be spared from Bedlam sufficiently long to perfect his colossal undertaking, and that on no account will he be induced any more to venture with a tasting-order to the docks.

MR. TONKS AND HIS GREAT CHRISTMAS FAILURE.

MR. TONKS was an eminent retail tea-dealer, as well known in the City as the Exchange grasshopper, the Bank beadle, or the generous gentlemen of the Hebrew persuasion, who used to do nothing all their lives but buy dressing-cases and pen-knives at the open anctiou in the Poultry. He was portly in his person, and spoke with an air of immutable reliance upon his own opinion. He was a smart tradesman, and very close-fisted, but his name was as good as any in Loudon. In fine, Mr. Tonks was as much esteemed and disliked as any man in any kind of position—so long as it is a position—may expect to be.

The establishment in which Mr. Tonks daily amassed his wealth was something wonderful to behold; especially so to country visitors. There was tea enough shovelled about in the windows to make you believe that the four hundred and twenty millions of Chinese who made up the last census had been actively engaged, day and night, for a twelvemonth, without ever going to bed, in collecting it, and had not gone through their work even then. And the coffee-mill—there was a monster machine! It resembled one of those dreadful engines used in pantomimes to grind aged individuals into youths and maidens; and if the old man who was perpetually turning it had tumbled in by accideut, nobody would have been at all surprised to have seen him come out a little boy, in a paper cap and shirt sleeves, at the spout, after a single revolution.

The rows of gaudy canisters were vividly embellished with scenes of every-day life in the Celestial Empire. Mr. Tonks said, they explained the process of tea-growing; but he might have said, with equal truth, of the ladies and gentlemen so cunningly limned, they portrayed writing for shares, conjuring, or doing penance. Their chief occupation seemed to be stauding in uncommonly painful and dislocated attitudes, as if they had got something down their backs they did not like: watching their friends and relatives carrying pails and gig umbrellas; or sitting down to a table with nothing on it except a teacup, an article not giving great promise of rollicking festivity.

And then the young men—real gentlemen, without doubt—perhaps officers come to distress—why, bless you, they attracted as many people inside the shop as the bowing mandarines in the window arrested the passers-by without. You could see them through the open doors putting up endless pounds of the orange-flavoured pekoe at four shillings (which there was such a struggle among the nobility to possess), writing upon them, banging them about on the counter, and then pitching them into the divison for the phantom consumers in the imaginary Dulwich district, where the visionary van would go on Tuesday, in a careless manner, that quite looked as if they regarded the tea no more than the humblest leaflet that ever trembled on its hedge-stalk. And the balloons so brilliantly lighted at night; the caddies and card pools; with the old noblemen addicted to corpulency lolling their tongues, as they reposed on heaps of congou; and the emaciated dervishes, who were posted about the mounds of hyson, altogether made an opposition Chinese Collection, which had the additional advantage of being a gratuitous exhibition entirely.

Well, in this sumptuous establishment, Tonks and Company—the “company” consisted of his wife and daughter—flourished several years; for they were well to do, and better each Christmas. Their notions expanded. Gravesend gave place to Margate, Margate to Ramsgate, and Ramsgate to the French coast. Miss Tonks was moved from the day-school in the Hackney Road to Miss Turnham’s academy at Chiswick, and then to Miss Burton’s “Pension” at Boulogne. Then, Mr. Tonks became various great things in the City; he used to talk a little and eat a great deal at Guildhall, and once went before the Queen; and at last retired from trade altogether, and bought a large estate in the lower part of Surrey, where he determined to reside, and for the rest of his life do the Old English Gentleman line of business.

The house he purchased was a fine old place; it had long been the home of one of the county families now extinct. It had tall twisted chimneys and heavy mullioned windows; a porch, a terrace, and a large hall; a staircase that you might have driven a coach-and-four up—if the horses had been Astley’s platform ones, and didn’t mind climbing—and weathercocks, my goodness, what a lot! If each wind from every point of the compass had taken one as its own private vane, not to answer any other, which was the case with most of them, there would still have been several to spare. The old patriarchal one over the hall appeared to have blown to seed, and all the atoms had taken root on the tiles, and sprung up by scores wherever they chose, their total immobility reducing the amateur in meteorology to the primitive process of

throwing up straws to satisfy his curiosity—an established and, at the same time, a diverting experiment.

Mr. Tonks had money, which the extinct family who lived there before had not; and the house was soon put in order. Relics of Elizabethan furniture were manufactured for him by the old curiosity dealers, at a day's notice; and more ancestors took their departure from Wardour Street than had ever before migrated from that musty locality. The most important of these, Sir Humphrey de Tonkes, who fought at "Azincour," was put at the top of the staircase, and his armour was set up in the hall on a dummy, supposed to represent the warrior, which had a propensity to lean forward in rather a drunken attitude than otherwise, giving a notion of the knight as he might have been supposed to have appeared when trying to keep on his legs with the aid of a spear, in the lists, after violently indulging in strong drinks, according to the fashion of the dark ages. The other relatives, preserved in oil, were hung here and there, and about; the most reputable paintings holding the best places—which is not always the case in picture-hanging—as may be seen any fine day in summer for a shilling, in London. And so they made a goodly line, from the great Humphrey just spoken of, to the small children in quaint straight dresses, who looked as if they might all have been taken up and rung like so many hand-bells.

The people in the neighbourhood soon began to call. First the doctor came, then the clergyman, and afterwards some of the families. These last were more tardy; for country aristocracy is cautious, having very little, in the abstract, to assume high ground upon, beyond conventional position, and consequently being fearful of more easily jeopardising it. But old Lady Hawksy, who hunted up everybody from whom available advantages were to be pumped, or otherwise secured, called at last, and all the rest followed, like ducks going to water, or sheep through a hedge. And then Mr. Tonks made up his own mind, as well as his wife's and daughter's, that it was time for the Old English Gentleman to come out strong. Annie Tonks—it was not a very pretty name, but that could not be altogether considered as her fault—was very nice-looking; I don't know how it is, but I never knew an Annie that was not. I may be prejudiced, but I can scarcely think so. Her father already calculated upon her making a good match—good, that is to say, in point of connexion—in return for which he would advance money. And, accordingly, he gave days of shooting to all eligible young men, and got them to his house afterwards. But Annie, though exceedingly courteous, never gave any of them the slightest encouragement, at which her father was first surprised,

and then annoyed. Possibly he would have been more so, had he known that a certain young lawyer, whom his daughter had met at that paradise of autumnal philanderings, Ramsgate, stood a far better chance—in fact, the *affaire du cœur* had almost been put beyond one—of becoming Annie's future husband, than the son of the sheriff, or Lady Hawksy's nephew, or any other elder brothers that Mr. Tonks wished would enter his family. And this young lawyer, whose name was Frederick Walcot, was the most impudent fellow imaginable. He would come to the house in spite of all Mr. Tonks's gruff receptions; and never took hints to go, or that he was not wanted; and always kept so close to Annie, that there was little room for anybody else to come near her. In fact, with him the young lady was as effectually guarded as the show-man who, in describing his view of the battle of Trafalgar, points out Lord Nelson to have been, "s'rounded by Captain Hardy." In former days, there was only one line of Old English Gentlemen to take up; now there are several. There is the virtuous-indignation Old English Gentleman, who makes speeches about the "wrongs of the poor man," and "nature's nobility," and maintains the right of the labourer to knock down fences, trespass on preserves, and steal game that he has no right to, whenever he pleases: the Old Gentleman in question not having any preserves of his own, of course. Then there is the Young England Old English Gentleman, who being as proud as Lucifer, gives a ball once a year to his servants and tenants, and apes humility in a manner wonderful to behold, but keeps his own circle about him most religiously, with the silver forks and superior soup at the top cross-table, to show the common people, after all, that this is but condescension on his part, and that the clay of which they are formed is but crockery to the porcelain of his own set. Then there is the Squire Old English Gentleman, who can talk of nothing but dogs and horses, shouts and bawls whenever he speaks, makes his friends drink as much wine as he chooses to swill himself, and appears to put his children and pet animals all on the same level—a descendant of the Western genus still existing. And there is the High Church Old English Gentleman, and his opponent the Low Church Old English Gentleman, with a score more, if we cared to name them. And lastly, the Old English Gentleman, properly so called, who belongs to a good family, keeps up a good establishment, cultivates good connexions, but at the same time shows great attention to many who are a step below him on the ladder of station, who adopt the courtesy and refined manners of his circle, handing them in turn still lower, and so diffusing in all grades that etiquette without which the bar-

rier of society would be knocked down altogether, and "nature's nobility" might honour us with their company to hob and nob whenever they pleased—which would be a great and glorious thing in the eyes of a philanthropical high-pressure epithet literary gentleman, but not altogether so agreeable in reality.

Mr. Tonks debated for a long time what sort of Old English Gentleman he should be, and at last thought an amalgamation of certain features from all these classes, with Young England uppermost, would be the best of all. And as the year was drawing to its close, he decided upon giving a Christmas entertainment to his neighbours in the old style at a great expenditure; and so assume a place with the best of them, and marry Annie to the son of the sheriff, or Lady Hawksy's nephew, or any other of the elder brothers.

By the assistance of "Hone's Every-Day Book," and the four-and-sixpenny edition of "Strutt's Sports and Pastimes," Mr. Tonks soon found out how Christmas ought to be kept. He determined upon having mummers, a fool, and a wassail-bowl; there would be also a yule-log, a hobby-horse, and a dragon; and he also decided upon a "wode-house," or a "salvage man," who, according to the book, should "dysporte himself with fireworks" amongst the company. But this latter character was discarded at the express desire of Mrs. Tonks, who thought squibs and book-muslin dresses, "which as they kiss consume," would not go very well together; and that, although violent delights might be thereat produced, they would have equally violent ends, and die in their triumph.

Old Lady Hawksy was the first who accepted the invitation; in consequence of which, by a bold stroke of policy, the Tonkses put their carriage at her disposal for a week, that she might drive round to all her acquaintances and say she was going, whereby they would be induced to come. And this had its effect; for whether from curiosity, condescension, love of gaiety, or politeness, everybody "had great pleasure in accepting," &c., and the heart of Mr. Tonks swelled with pride, as that of his wife did with maternal speculation, when they thought of all their guests comprising all the gentry of the neighbourhood, and those designated in circulars merely as "inhabitants;" especially Lady Hawksy's nephew, who was in the Guards, and whom Mrs. Tonks hoped would bring some brother officers, and that they would all come in their soldiers' clothes, and look as ferocious and imposing as their partners would permit. No invitation was to be sent to Frederick Waleot; this was expressly insisted, and yet, somehow or another, curiously enough, he contrived to know all about the party, as we shall see.

Mr. Tonks was determined for once to make a splash. The supper was to come down in light vans from Gunter's; the music from Chappell's; and the mummers and hobby-horse from Nathan's—at least, their outward gear.

The guests were to dance in the hall, and resect in the dining-room, whilst the fool was to say clever things everywhere all the evening. For this purpose, Mr. Tonks engaged a witty mau at a salary of thirty shillings, who was an actor at one of the minor theatres, and used to conjure and show a magic lantern at his parties when Annie was a little girl. The frame of Sir Humphrey de Tonkes was decked out with holly. His armour was polished up until it looked so new, that you would never have believed it had been worn at Agincourt; and the feathers from Mrs. Tonks's own bonnet were put in the helmet—handsome drooping ones, quite ready to go to court on the shortest notice. And so, at last, all was ready, and the evening arrived.

Frost and snow are no longer attributes of Christmas. They used to be, but fog and floods have long since taken their places, and did so more especially on the evening of Mr. Tonks's party. But most of those invited kept carriages—he sent his own for Lady Hawksy, but her nephew preferred driving over in a dog-cart from the barracks—and those who did not, got frys from the nearest town, so that all arrived pretty well. Mrs. Tonks received the guests in the drawing-room. She had been at Guildhall on various Lord Mayor's days, and took her ideas of receptions generally from the ceremonies observed on that occasion, in consequence of which she exhibited much dignity; and when this was done they passed on to the hall, admired the pictures, made cutting remarks in a low tone, and waited for what came next. But the worst was that, for a long time nothing did come. The young people had all got engaged—that is to say, only for the dances; and Annie was to open the ball—which is a ceremony we do not precisely understand, seeing that a ball is generally opened by twenty young ladies simultaneously, in the first quadrille—with old Lady Hawksy's nephew; but the music had not arrived. What could be the reason? Chappell was a man of his word, and Mr. Tonks had expressly engaged him on an evening when Covent Garden would be occupied by those kind-hearted gentlemen who are going to give everybody quatern loaves for a halfpenny apiece. And he had, moreover, arranged that he should put the band in the hall gallery, where they might have crackers, double-barrelled guns, horsewhips, red fire, and a cat and a terrier in one hamper, to give the effects to Jullien's various quadrilles with proper force, as well as the garden engine for a new set called

L'Orage, in the finale of which a real shower of rain was to fall on the heads of the guests, to be followed by the Parapluie Polka. What could have become of them? It was very odd!—so it was. However, something must be done, and accordingly the mummers were ordered into the hall to carry on time until the music came. But the entrance of mummers without music is in itself a slow proceeding, and not productive of much mirth. The young ladies looked at the odd dresses—mostly *moyen-âge* costumes with large heads, which preserved that comical expression of stereotyped hilarity, perfectly uninfluenced by circumstances, we notice in pantomimes, and said, “How droll, to be sure!” and the great neighbours looked coldly at one another, as much as to ask, “What does all this mean?” and then the excitement caused by their entrance was over. The absence of the music was the death of everything. The polka could not be danced between the Stag and the Railway King, who was to be dressed with a tall hat like the chimney of a locomotive. The Hobby-horse capered about the hall, and hit the people on the head with a bladder tied to a stick, at which some laughed the first time, but voted it stupid the second; and the Dragon was very tame indeed. He kept in a corner of the room, close by Annic, all the evening, and appeared to be her own especial Dragon-in-waiting.

Mr. Tonks got frantic; he despatched everybody available from his house in all directions with lanterns and keepers’ fuses to look after the music. He ran in and out of the hall upon fictitious business, and was at one time found cowering in the passage, all by himself, fearing to face the yawning company, who were gradually relapsing into solemn silence; and, at last, gave orders that the Fool should go into the hall and be funny. But the Fool proved as great a failure as everything else. Nobody cared to say anything to him to draw him out, and, if they had, the chances are that he would not have come. For he had formed his character upon the models offered by Christmas clowns, and when he had said, “Here we are again!” and “I’m a looking at you!” or “Here’s somebody coming!” which were not witticisms productive of great merit upon frequent repetition, he could do nothing more but crow like a cock, a performance not altogether devoid of merit in its proper place—the House of Commons or the Opera omnibus-box, for example—but not calculated to throw people into convulsions in formal private society. Everything was now at a dead stand-still. The yule-log, which had been hewn from the freshly-excavated trunk of a tree, would not burn anyhow, but sulked upon the hearth, splitting and sputtering as though it was hissing the failure of the entertainments, and filling the hall

with smoke. It was too early for the wassail-bowl, for the company had barely finished tea; and, although Mrs. Tonks rushed about with packs of cards amongst the guests, entreating them to draw one and form a rubber, everybody declined except old Lady Hawksy's nephew, who laboured under the impression that the mistress of the house was about to exhibit some conjuring tricks, and having taken a card, expected to be asked to look at it and return it where he pleased, previous to its being discovered in an egg, or a workbox, or, perhaps, a pancake. But on finding that this process was merely a trap to bottle him up in a room, away from everything and everybody except two or three bits of quality tumbled into decay, who were to make up the rubbers with him, he returned it immediately without looking at it, with much alacrity, assuring Mrs. Tonks that he never played anything but skittles, adding, that he should be very happy to do so directly, if there were any that could be brought into the hall.

At length, in his agony of despair, Mr. Tonks assembled his retainers in the housekeeper's room, and asked if anybody could play any instrument whatever. Yes! one could: lucky thought! Tom the helper knew the fiddle. Tom the helper was the graceless ne'er-to-do-well of the village, and confined the sphere of his utility chiefly to the stables of "The Tonks' Arms," an hostelry adjoining the Hall, which had been promoted to an inn *vice* the beershop of "The Crooked Billet." On this eventful evening, Tom had come to the house to assist, and had so proved the hospitality of the kitchen, that, in his present state of self-glorification, he would have offered to have played anything, even if it had been the sackbut, or any other defunct instrument with the nature of which even the most ancient subscribers to the "Ancient Concerts" were unacquainted. As it was, he went and got his fiddle, which was a marvellous thing to look at, having been made by himself out of tin, for the sole use of the benefit club in the village; and being arrayed in a spare livery-coat, was put up in the gallery with an enormous jack of strong beer—which, by some perversion of his comprehensive faculties, he called "his rossum"—and told to begin whatever he knew.

But Tom's knowledge was limited. In vain the company suggested the Chatsworth Quadrilles, the Bouquet Royal Waltz, the Annen or Mont Blanc Polka; they might as well have called for the particular air to which Doctor Faustus caused his scholars, under fear of the whip, to perform that remarkable dance from Scotland into France, and subsequently into the Peninsula, before he whipped them back again; although how they contrived to surmount the various engineering difficulties on the route is by

no means satisfactorily proved. But this by the way. Tom did not know these, but he knew the "Tank" and "Money Musk," together with a mysterious air, which he termed "Hunches of puddun and lumps of fat," and which nobody was bold enough to call for, the name being an unpleasant one, not to say offensive. So the "Tank" it was obliged to be; and before it had been played one minute, Lady Hawksy's nephew found out it was a capital Polka tune; whereupon he rushed up to Annie, and almost without asking her, he whirled her off in the back step across the hall, and was followed directly by a dozen couples, who had got wearied to death from inactivity, and went into it like mad. But in the second round, the Dragon, who had all this time sulked in the corner, crept into the circle, and in the most awkward manner contrived to get right in the way of Lady Hawksy's nephew, and trip him over, which feat being accomplished, he crept back again to the corner, and Annie, by some means or another, hurt her foot in this very round, and could not dance any more, retiring to her old seat, and begging her cavalier would find another partner.

The people went on dancing; and it was astonishing what they adapted "The Tank" to. It was played on continuously for the quadrilles, but for the waltz was rather difficult, until somebody proposed the *Valse à deux temps*, which, just come in, not depending upon any tune at all, but being danced at the will of the company, was a good introduction. But all this time the "rossum" was doing its work; and after gazing at the dancers for some time in bewildered surprise, Tom threw his fiddle down into the hall, through the chandelier, swearing "he'd be jiggered"—the precise meaning of the particle was not clearly understood—"if he played no more; they beat all the club people he ever know'd!"

There was terrible confusion, and it is said that some young ladies who had eligible partners fainted right off in their arms. Mr. and Mrs. Tonks were aghast; they stood at first speechless, and then each called for Annie at the same time in some vague desire to collect their home forces around them, as if they feared an attack from the indignant visitors. But Annie was nowhere to be found. She had suddenly disappeared; and the Dragon had disappeared also; and all was speechless amazement, until they learned from the lodge-keeper that the apocryphal monster and the young lady had entered the sheriff's own carriage, and gone off through the floods as fast as Mr. Tonks's own postillion could take them, the sheriff's retainers being drunk in the buttery (as Mr. Tonks would call the wash-house), in which state they forcibly took possession of the wassail-bowl and emptied it.

The following morning Mr. Chappell's band was discovered, like Spenser's allegory of February, sitting in an old waggon in the middle of the floods, in which state they had been left by the treachery of the man who was to meet them at the nearest railway station, and take them all over to the Hall; and where they would have been much longer, had not the principal cornet attracted the attention of the agricultural population—by a post horn without the *galop* — to their plight. And, singular to say, this traitor went on straight to the Hall, and took the part of the Dragon, who spirited Annie away, changing again, when in the sheriff's carriage, to no less a person than young Walcot, who forthwith accompanied the lady of his heart by rail to Gretna—following the force of high example—and came back penitent and married, before Mr. and Mrs. Tonks had recovered from the anguish into which the failure of keeping Christmas in the old style had plunged them.

There was the usual business to go through: the anger, the pleadings and the forgiveness; and then, Mr. Tonks thought that Annie had perhaps done better, after all, than if she had caught old Lady Hawksy's nephew. For subsequent little rudenesses on the part of his guests disgusted him with society above him, and he began to think that, however much money he spent, he was only sneered at covertly by those whom he attempted to equalize himself with, and that, if his notions of doing good and being benevolent were real, and not conventionally chivalric, they could be carried out as well by the retired London tradesman as the got-up-for-the-purpose Old English Gentleman, to which position he had no pretensions.



HOW MR. STRAGGLES WENT CHEAP TO ASCOT.

MR. STRAGGLES sat by himself, on a high stool, in his lonely chambers, which were up at the top of the house, thinking on things in general, and looking over his garden.

His garden was not very extensive, being of necessity confined to his window-sill; but it was sufficiently varied. He had one root of mignonette restrained within bounds by a light fence of matches, and that vegetable string, whatever it is, by which the early vagaries of lettuces are curbed: a pot of nasturtiums, the leaves whereof turned yellow successively, and then dropped away; some delicate creepers producing small yellow flowers, which in the fulness of a generous imagination he termed canary-birds; and two scarlet-runners, which he would watch, and wonder, as they grew, whether they would ever form a beau-stalk similar to that renowned one of the nursery chronicles that Jack ascended with such ultimate profit to his family.

Mr. Straggles's garden would have been in a better condition, had his disposition been less impatient or inquiring. But a desire to become acquainted with the beautiful workings of nature led him so frequently to poke up the seeds with a steel pen, to see how they were getting on, that their growth was much affected by these investigations. And as they were replaced in a careless manner, topsy-turvy, or half uncovered, or much too deep, their health was considerably deranged. Nor was the soil favourable to their growth. Many years ago it had been mould, but was now composed of little chips of mortar, washings of the house-tops, fragments of glass and crockery, bits of stick, and sweepings of the floor. Life, however, goes on under marvellous disadvantages; and, somehow or other, the seeds struggled into stalks and leaves, which climbed and fluttered, and caught the blacks, and died, around what old authors would have called "Mr. Straggles: his wiudows."

No one knew precisely what profession Mr. Straggles followed. He had chambers, and people called on him, and he was seen flitting about Westminster Hall, and Mark Lane, and the General Post Office. He knew a great many respectable persons, and a

great many who were not. He had a small property of his own; was never known to be in debt; wore fancy shirts; loved cheap steam-boats; and took walks to Dulwich; generally wore shoes; liked theatres; dined at Hancock's in Rupert Street; was rather feeble-fibred than strong-minded; and in stature somewhat approaching the style popularly known as "gangling." He always looked as if he wanted training up a ladder, or hop-pole. If you pressed him into a corner by asking point-blank what he was, he would confess to being an "Agent," which meant, he could get your coals, wine, second-hand books, cigars, bottled ale, musical boxes, fish-sauce, or misfit Lehocq's boots, in any quantity and upon the most advantageous terms.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Straggles, addressing the scarlet-runner as he gave it a little water from the *carafe* on his wash-stand—"ah! you may well look dried up. I am. Phewgh!"

And Mr. Straggles threw open his waistcoat, and displayed all the huntsmen on his shirt, with their red coats and blue horses, to the best advantage. Having done which, he finished the contents of the water-bottle himself, and directly afterwards appeared to grow an inch higher.

"Paper!" shouted a boy at the door, as he accompanied the last syllable with a loud knock. Mr. Straggles had yesterday's *Times* every morning; and having taken it in, he began to read the news.

"Bless me!" he said to himself, as his eye fell upon a string of advertisements of the things presumed to be indispensable for the races, from guinea hampers and paletots, to gents' sporting handkerchiefs and "nobby" pattern'd shawls—"bless me! it's Ascot, and I meant to go to-morrow. How are the funds?"

Mr. Straggles looked in his desk, and there was a little purse apparently made to just fit the top of his thumb. He found, on examining its contents, that he had a sovereign less than he thought he had. And the man who owed him five pounds was always out of town when he called.

"Well," he thought, after a little philosophical reflection, "go I must; but I won't do it expensively. No, no, I'll go cheap. None of your fast coaches there and back for thirty shillings. I won't spend more than ten; and when I'm on the course, who'll know how I went?" And in this resolve he immediately caught a boy in the street, whom he despatched on a message to his laundress to let her know that he should want his white trousers on Wednesday night; and he went himself after the two pair of kid gloves that he had left to be cleaned the week before at the bonnet-shop where the young lady was with the

nice hair, whom Mr. Straggles had promised to escort some fine evening to Cremorne Gardens—when he got an order.

Thursday morning arrived—as Thursday morning always will do if you only wait patiently for it—and Mr. Straggles rose with the lark that hopped about a bit of turf outside the second floor window of the opposite house—for second floors are partial to larks in various ways—and betook himself to the Golden Cross. It was early in the morning. The young men were setting out the shop windows; omnibus loads of inward bound suburban clerks loitered up the Strand; coffee-room windows were open to let out the fumes of the night before; wet morning papers fluttered round the coach offices, and the man with the cheap cutlery commenced cutting his gloves to pieces. How Mr. Straggles pitied everybody who remained in town!

“Cab, sir! Here y’are, sir!” said a driver.

“Nonsense,” replied Mr. Straggles, pleasantly bantering in the lightness of his heart. “How can I be there, when I’m here?”

“Better ride, sir, it’s pourin’ of rain where you’re going.”

But Mr. Straggles walked on.

“I say, sir,” cried the driver after him, “mind your legs don’t bolt away from you. You’ll never keep up with them at that rate.”

Which pleasant humour so delighted a boy who was playing on the bones to an old fruit woman as she set out her stall for the day, that he preceded Mr. Straggles with a Nubian melody, occasionally warning the passengers of the important person he preceded by telling them to get out of the way. And in this manner Mr. Straggles reached the Golden Cross, having thus far avoided all expenditure.

“South-Western Railway, sir?” inquired the book-keeper. “Omnibus gone about five minutes, sir. I should recommend à cab, or you’ll lose the train.”

There was no other way: it was two shillings gone, but what was to be done? Mr. Straggles performed the difficult feat of getting into a restless Hansom, and told the driver to overtake the omnibus. But the driver could not, all he could do. He dropped his whip, and got hemmed in by coal-waggons at Millbank, and blockaded by numbers going into the new Houses of Parliament, right across Abingdon Street, so that when he reached Vauxhall Bridge there was no trace of the bus. And then came two pikes, which, with their natural voracity, swallowed large sums of halfpence: so, that when he got to Nine Elms, he had—anything but a Cup-day temper.

Careless people would at once have taken a seat to Woking,

but Mr. Straggles was cautious to a fault. "No," he reasoned; "the vehicles at Woking will make a harvest and combine. I know their ways. I will stop at Weybridge, where there will be no rush, and make a quiet bargain." So he took a second-class return ticket to Weybridge, and saved something besides.

Off went the train, gasping among the nursery-grounds, and screaming across Battersea Fields; rattling over the Wandle, and rushing through the wilds of Wimbledon as if Jerry Abershaw had been again at its heels; squeaking past forlorn Kingston-upon-Railway; scaring the goslings on Ditton Marsh, and racketing through the cutting of St. George's Hills, until it pulled up at Weybridge, and Mr. Straggles got out.

Here he found nothing but a four-wheeled chaise which went to Chertsey, where, the driver told him, "there was lots of things to the races."

"Oh!" said Mr. Straggles; "what's your fare?"

"Take you to Chessy for three shillings, sir. Perhaps somebody else is going: then it'll come cheaper."

Mr. Straggles cast his eyes towards the station, and thought he saw a passenger who looked as if he was going to "Chessy," as the driver called it. He did not know why; but in his anxiety he caught at men of straws. The passenger came up, looked to the right and to the left, then at the four-wheeled chaise, gave a whistle of indecision, shook his head in answer to the hail, and walked off across the common, as if he had seven-leagued boots on. Hope left Mr. Straggles's bosom, carrying with her the three shillings from his pocket.

"Never mind," thought Mr. Straggles; "I was going to the Haymarket on Saturday, and now I won't: so it will not make any difference in the long run." Then he added aloud to the driver:

"Now on to Chertsey with your sacred load."

The man had not read Shakspeare—he had not got to Chertsey yet—but the speech seemed to imply a wish to start, and off they went, Mr. Straggles singing "The Standard Bearer," to German words of his own, until it verged into *Robert toi que j'aime*; in which ballad, when he came to "Grace!" he shouted it out so lustily, that the old horse actually jumped forward, and the man thought his companion a little touched. But Mr. Straggles's joyousness was more hysterical than real, as his expenditure increased. He was singing to drown reflection, in that noisily absent manner which Mr. Punch affects after he has thrown his infant out of window—the mask worn by a hollow heart, as was once beautifully observed. And so they went on until they arrived at their destination.

Chertsey is a mild market town, which once boasted a powerful abbey, nobody knows where ; where Henry the Sixth was buried, nobody knows how ; and finally annihilated, nobody knows when ; for it escaped at the time of the dissolution of the religious houses, nobody knows why. Its natives are friendly, tranquil persons. If the Wandering Jew paid periodical visits thereto every quarter of a century, he would find the inhabitants precisely in the same places, doing what they did five-and-twenty years ago ; unmoved by external excitements, and unaltered by popular progress. But at Ascot time the heart of Chertsey commences to throb faintly. The inhabitants see people they do not know about the streets, and run out of their shops to look at them. Horses, whose existence was never suspected, emerged into active life ; and long-departed coaches, pertaining to the good old times of drawling locomotion, are pulled from their mausoleums, and mopped and greased, and once more put upon the road.

"Where's that trap going to?" inquired Mr. Straggles, as he saw a coach waiting at one of the inns.

"Ask-it," answered the man.

Mr. Straggles put on a severe expression at what he considered the man's impertinence, for he did not at first perceive his meaning. But when he found it was going to Ascot, and that there was just one place left, which he could have for ten shillings, he closed at once, and climbed on to the roof, behind. "In for a penny in for a pound," he thought. "Thank goodness, this is the last expense!"

The man touched his hat, and begged a trifle for himself. Mr. Straggles gave him a shilling, and told him to keep sixpence. But he had not got it ; so Mr. Straggles, perceiving a pretty girl inside who was looking at him, said, "Ah ! well, never mind, keep it all," with dashing liberality. When the man had driven off, Mr. Straggles found he had left his gloves in the chaise, so he had just fifteen seconds to jump down and buy some more. In his hurry of trying on, he split one pair into ribbons, which he had to pay for ; and getting up quickly into the coach, he blacked the others against some dreadful composition put on to make it look new for the day : and by this time he was getting perfectly reckless, so much so that he began to sing "The Standard Bearer" again, and after some bottled ale at the Wheatsheaf at Virginia Water, volunteered it aloud for the delight of his fellow-passengers.

"I think we must have a sweepstakes," said a traveller in a cut-away coat on the box. "Are you all agreeable, gents?"

"Oh yes—certainly:" they were all agreeable ; and Mr. Straggles

could not say he was not. It was to be half-a-crown a chance, which he paid, and drew a horse he never heard of. Never mind: outsiders did win sometimes.

"I'll take your fares, if you please," said the coachman, as they crept up the hill beyond Blacknest. "It will save trouble on the course."

Again Mr. Straggles's hand was in his pocket, and the song of "The Standard-Bearer" died as faintly away as did the voice of the bleeding hero. But the arrival on the course for a time chased away his despair.

"We shall keep here," said the coachman, as he at last drew up in the ranks below the distance; "and we'll meet after the last race, if you please: you'll hear a horn.—Now, just leave the horses alone, will you?"

This was said to half a dozen men, who were violently unharnessing the horses, to take them, by force, to all sorts of stables. Then Mr. Straggles got down, with some others, to support the coachman; and directly he put his feet to the ground, two men seized him, and insisted upon brushing him almost into a state of electricity, until he had bribed them to desist, after which he was permitted to go at large.

How Mr. Straggles walked up and down within the rails, and assumed refined attitudes as he eyed the ladies in the front rank of carriages; how he bought an "Oxley's erect card," and read it with an air of great depth and interest; how he met some friends who had lunch, and gave him some, luring him into more sweepstakes, all of which he lost; how he was also attracted by some wonderful eyes, that had driven him mad at an evening party the week before, to go into the Grand Stand; and how the same bright eyes complained of the heat, and accepted ices and expensive accompaniments; and how Mr. Straggles determined upon not going to the Haymarket thereupon, but also gave up a notion he had of a new paletot and a week at Boulogne—all these things might have happened had he gone by any other way to the races, and therefore need not be particularly chronicled.

At length the last race was run, and Mr. Straggles sought the trysting-place. But however easily to be found out it had been when the coach first came on the course, it was now a matter almost of impossibility; for there were hundreds of coaches alike all along the densely crowded ranks right down to the corner. And the same number of horns were blowing in every direction—the sound being to the ears what the Will-o'-the-wisp is to the eyes, leading the wanderer here and there, only to laugh at him as it rose in another place. He got almost frantic. Like Leonora,

he ran up and down the lines wringing his hands, and asking for his particular vehicle, but none could give the information. The clouds of dust around the course showed how quickly the company were departing. He dived under drags, and got behind horses' heels—stood on strange wheels, and clambered across unknown front seats—mounted wrong roofs in his agony, and was thought to be one of the swell mob in consequence—until the last coach went off and again carried Hope away on its seat, together with half of his ten shillings, and the return of his day-ticket.

"Now then, who's for Slough?" shouted a man, who was driving a curiously fragile car with one horse—one of those vehicles formerly denominated "flying bedsteads," in the days when we went Greenwich by the Kent Road. "Take yer to the rail, sir?"

This was addressed to Mr. Straggles, and he immediately hailed the driver, regardless of consequences. He was not off yet, though. The man would ply all along the booths and taverns, and got invited to have a drink at all of them; so that it was actually getting dark when he started. Then the horse would not go beyond a slow trot; and one of the wheels was obliged to be watched every minute, for fear it should catch fire, until the bell for the last up-train was ringing when they crossed the old high road at Slough and neared the station.

"There's the train!" cried Mr. Straggles, "I can see the smoke. Drive on! drive on! What's to pay?"

"Ten bob," answered the man, pithily.

"Ten what?" screamed Mr. Straggles. "Ten! What for? Pooh! stuff!"

"Can't let you down, master, if you don't. That's my rights," said the man, with great coolness.

"I'll pull you up," said Mr. Straggles. "There's your money. And mind, you shall hear of this again you damned infernal scamp! Where's your number?"

"That's verry unlucky," answered the man. "Lor! where can it be? I'm sure I don't know—do you?"

The train had stopped at the station, and the doors were closed. With the recklessness of desperation, Mr. Straggles vaulted over the rails of the platform, and just as it was moving on, rushed into the only carriage that appeared available; and, closing the door after him, was in another second rattling off towards London; and then, completely exhausted in mind and body, he sank down into a corner, and fell asleep.

He was roused by the lantern of the guard glaring in his eyes.

as his ticket was demanded at Paddington. Of course, he had none to give, and they fetched the superintendent. In vain he assured them that he had got in at Slough, acknowledging that the doors of the station were closed. He looked in his dishevelled state such a suspicious character, that the policemen entered the carriage to accompany him to the terminus, when he was immediately marched between two guards to the secretary's office.

"I cannot help it, sir," said the functionary, after a rapid and feverish attempt of Mr. Straggles to explain his case. "The bye-laws of the company order that any person found without a ticket must pay——"

Mr. Straggles groaned.

"Must pay full fare from the most distant station."

"And that is——?" gasped our luckless friend.

"Let me see. First class, single journey, from Exeter. Two pounds four shillings and sixpence."

Mr. Straggles heard no more. The lights whirled round him; the noise as of a thousand engines letting off their steam at once sounded in his ears, and he fell into the arms of the nearest policeman.

* * * * *

He recovered from a brain fever a poorer, but a wiser man. And he made two great resolves: first, never to go to the races again, if he could help it; and secondly, if at any time his feeble mind yielded to the temptation, not to try any cheap methods, however tempting they might appear, since cutting short the expenses, like short cuts in general, was certain to end only in trouble, and wearing and tearing disappointment.



HOW MR. STRAGGLES ATE WHITEBAIT AT GREENWICH.

JULY came on, and it was more hot than ever in London. You might have poached eggs on the pavement, and there was no shade anywhere. Even in Covent Garden the strawberries sweltered and baked in their pottles; the gold and silver fish languished in globes of tepid water; Mary Johnson's bouquets drooped over their lacework papers; and the heat forced the crimson pendants of the fuchsias into long pink trumpets, which, being blown, shrivelled and died.

The only thing cool in all London was the block of Wenham Lake ice in the Strand, and that appeared to be perspiring at such a rate that its dissolution was always being immediately expected. The curds-and-whey on the stalls positively steamed, and the small dusty high-dried crabs, at three a penny, rattled again, as every one became its own oven. How the gasping passengers in the omnibuses survived the inside transit is difficult to conceive; the Fire King himself would have suffered. The only people who underwent but little inconvenience were the cooks at the chop-houses, and the stokers in the river steam-boats, and they never perceived any difference, as they faced their ever glowing ranges and furnaces. But the wild beasts, under the mighty bell-glasses at the Surrey Zoological Gardens yawned, and blinked, and stretched themselves out at full length upon the hot floor of their dens, and thought they were once more at home, dreaming of torrid jungles, and simoons, and scorching sands, until cool evening dispelled the illusion, and the besieging of Gibraltar, with its rockets, and drums, and crackers, recalled them once more to a sense of their true position.

No one suffered more from heat than did Mr. Straggles in his small chambers before alluded to, immediately under the roof, which now collectively formed a hot-house, wherein he might have grown pine-apples. He could not get cold. He opened all the doors and windows, but a draught of heated air was all that came to refresh him. He left off wearing waistcoats, and bought a blouse, but he only felt the oppressiveness of the sun the more

when he put on his ordinary attire to go out; and then he longed to be July, as Spenser once described that month; envied the performers in the Poses Plastiques, and fell into some wild notion of taking the diving-bell at the Polytechnic Institution for a week, and living at the bottom of the tank.

But it was worst of all when he went to his dinner. He took this meal, generally, at the restaurant of an ingenious foreigner, somewhere in the rear of the National Gallery, who was reported to have the right of shooting over Leicester Square, to supply the varied preparations of rabbits on his *carte*. Here it was that Mr. Straggles could scarcely breathe. For the soups, and the gravies, and the stews, the plates of pallid meat, and the tough and piping portions of unholy puddings, formed such a hot thickened atmosphere, that the very flies had difficulty in forcing their way through it to the open windows, from which dense vapours might be seen rolling; and these, diluted with the air, pervaded the neighbourhood for some distance round to such an extent, that you might almost have believed the inhabitants lived upon the odours. Mr. Straggles stood this a long time, for the place was cheap, and the races had cost him so much money that he was obliged to retrench. But at length he got nearly stewed himself, and in a desperate plight of not knowing what to do next, formed Arcadian plans for living on bread and fruits, or periwinkles and pickled eels, beneath the coolest arcades of Hungerford. "Ullow! Straggy!" said a voice down the letter-box to our hero. "Are you at home?"

"What, Joe!" exclaimed Mr. Straggles, stopping in the attempt he had persevered in for some months to play the minor part of "The Standard Bearer" on his octave flute. "That's not you?"

"Isn't it though: look out."

And then the end of a small walking-stick was pushed through the letter slit, and the box opened, not having a trustworthy fastening, as its contents fell on the floor. Mr. Straggles's box formed the receptacle for all sorts of fugitive donations, presented by the men in the other chambers, as they went up and down-stairs—kings and knaves of playing-cards, cherry stones, straws from sherry-cobblers, pit checks of theatres the night before, advertising tailors' brochures, sometimes crackers, and once he found a mouse.

"Come in, old fellow: who'd have thought of seeing you?"

The new arrival looked something like a fashionable gentleman who had been kept from last year, with a dash of the Leicester Square foreigner about him. He had only one glove, which he

held in his hand, and this had once been yellow. His boots, though trodden out and cracked at the outside, were intensely polished, and had long toes which somewhat turned up; and protuberances at the ankle, before and behind, under the trousers, which were strapped down, showed that they were shorts. He had a long black stock, much perforated by pins, and no collar; in fact, the general style of his get-up was the "seedy," a word implying approaching extermination as forcibly as reproduction.

"Why, Joe, what a Mossoo you look!" said Mr. Straggles.

"Mossoo," was the Straggles for "Monsieur," picked up from a course of six lessons in French, and the received stage pronunciation, and applied by our friend generally to all foreign gentlemen of peculiarly continental cut.

"And where have you been?" he added.

"Boulogne, sir, Boulogne—the land of the free. Ever since the railways blew up, I have been obliged to come to Dan Tucker. Eh, twig? pheugh! yerg! yerg! yerg!"

And here the friend put himself in an attitude of banjo-playing with his stick, made Ethiopiau noises, and lyrically described the excitement caused by the coming to town of the person above named.

"But I say, Joe, where have you been living?"

"Till within two mouths on board the Nore Light—provisional director of the floating beacon. They never thought of looking for me there. I've made great friends with the keeper; very jolly fellow, who never goes on shore, because he says it makes him so sick. He gets qualmish sometimes on board, when it's calm."

"Are you all right now?"

"Right as twenty trivets: only they'd have me, if they could, about that cursed Slushpool and Landmark Heath Extension. There must be as many writs out against me as, pasted together, would reach the whole length of the line?"

"Then what are you here for?"

"Oh! I was obliged to come over. I've got a plan, and been sitting up all night with capitalists and accountants to carry it out. Ten thousand pounds down, and half a million a year safe."

"Have you got the ten thousand down, Joe?"

"No; but as good—as good. I'm going back to Boulogne to-night to see about it."

Mr. Straggles thought that Boulogne, from what he had heard of it, was not exactly the place to go for ten thousand pounds; but he knew his friend, and did not say anything.

For Mr. Joseph Flitter, as he was called, lived in a self-created world of gigantic schemes, and had never been out of hot water since Mr. Straggles had known him. Their agencies had first thrown them together, and they had never met but he had something to propose that must return five hundred per cent. No matter what the scheme was; he got up companies, and railways, and newspapers, with equal facility. When a junction-bank failed he started a floating-bath, with the same prospects of liquidation; and as soon as he found that one bushel of the new argillaceous shale would not fuel a steamer over the Atlantic, he had the galvanic decomposition of water patent all ready, the apparatus for which, to work the Great Western, could be put under a hat.

"I suspect one or two are on the look-out for me," said Mr. Flitter; "so I'll tell you how I'm going to Boulogne. That London Bridge Wharf is never safe. Sir, I believe the writs walk about there bolt upright by themselves, all day long, to catch the passengers. But the steward of the boat is a capital fellow; I wear coats and shawls on shore for him, and carry uncorked bottles of brandy; and he is going to look out for me, and hook on to a boat if I'll be in it, off the Isle of Dogs to-night. Now, where do you dine?"

Mr. Straggles suggested the place above mentioned, near Leicester Square.

"Oh no, no!" said Mr. Flitter. Fancy this weather, too—pah! Let's dine at Greenwich, eh? Do the thing for once; oceans of water *souchée*; swamps of stewed eels; no end of salmon cutlets; pyramids of whitebait; and an acre of brown bread-and-butter."

"Beautiful!" cried Mr. Straggles, carried away by his friend's enthusiasm.

"I believe you, my boy," continued Mr. Flitter, "Gallons of cyder-cup, too, and Badminton. Iced punch! ducks! peas! cutlets! and brown bread-and-butter again! And then the wine, and the river, and the strawberries! Ah!"

This time Mr. Straggles sighed.

"But it costs so much, Joe," he added, sadly.

"Cost be (something)'d," replied Mr. Flitter. "You can do it at all prices. Look here"—and he pulled a small bill from his pocket—"Tea with shrimps, a shilling; ditto with children, sixpence."

"I don't seem to care much about children," observed Mr. Straggles.

"No—no nonsense, Straggy. I mean to pay, you know. You

shall be my guest, and see me off. I say, you havn't got such a thing as a pair of boots to lend a fellow, have you? Yours would fit me."

Mr. Straggles had a cherished pair with red tops, so smart, that he often regretted that he could not wear them outside his trousers, when they would have given him the air of a Polka nobleman. Under other circumstances he would not have thought of lending them, but Mr. Flitter was going to stand the dinner, so he brought them from his bedroom.

"But I say, Joe," he asked, "if you are off to Boulogne, what will become of my boots?"

"Oh—all right. You must come with me as far as Gravesend, just to see me off; you can get back for a shilling, and take your boots with you. A collar, too, I think; yes, a collar, and then I shall be slap up. Recollect—for I've got business to do, and must be off—if we don't meet again, the Hospital Terrace, at seven o'clock."

Mr. Flitter went into Mr. Straggles's room, and put on the articles, and then took his departure.

At five p.m. Mr. Straggles locked his outer door, and went to London Bridge by water for a farthing, in a new steamer called the *Earwig*, and then waited on the pier, and enjoyed a penn'orth of cherries, as he watched the flock of steamers crowding along the river.

"Now, who's for Grinnidge?" bawled a man. "Outside boat!"

Mr. Straggles took his ticket, and found the boat would start at the half-hour; but as it wanted a few minutes, he went back to buy another bunch of cherries, to beguile the journey. He was kept a little time waiting for change, the woman having hunted under every leaf in her basket for the coppers, and he then went and took his place in the outside boat, by the man at the wheel, just as she was starting.

"I say!" exclaimed Mr. Straggles, as the boat appeared to be off the wrong way, "where are you going to?"

"Ungerford," was the reply.

"But I'm going to Greenwich!"

"No, that you isn't; leastwise now," said the man. "That's the Grinnidge boat just moving."

"They told me it was the outside one," cried Mr. Straggles.

"So she was till we come round," said the man. "This here's the *Earwig*."

The very boat he had come by! But there was no appeal, so Mr. Straggles went back to Hungerford, and there had to wait

half-an-hour for the next chance, in which interval the tide turned the wrong way. But at last the hospitable *Waterman No. 9* received him, and he got fairly off, looking ruefully at the unavailable ticket he had before taken, and munching his cherries rather than enjoying them.

But the journey to Greenwich by water on a bright afternoon, with a whitebait dinner in anticipation, is not calculated to nourish blue devils, albeit it does good to spirits generally. There is so much to look at, and it is always amusing, even if you have gone backwards and forwards every day, from the restless, scuffling, swarming steamers, to the lumbering barges, that will get in the way of everything by choice, as the man, pulling them by the heavy oars—or rather conceiving that he does so—appears so disproportioned to his work, as the diligent flea who draws the man-of-war; old tumble-down wharfs, and crazy public-houses with singularly unsafe galleries, and warehouses so lofty that they have as many stories as the “Arabian Nights,” as Mr. Straggles pleasantly observed; little boys bathing in the mud under the shelter of stranded lighters; heavy continental boats, like drowsy leviathans, just breathing from their funnels, with their crew idling over their sides; huge manufactories of articles hitherto unheard of, or scarcely supposed important enough to have a room for themselves; and a border of flag-staffs, steeples, chimneys, scaffolds, and more ships, out and away at the distance, and apparently built into the very heart of London,—all these things furnish plenty to look at. And so Mr. Straggles forgot his lost ticket, and determined to make up for his loss by not having a cigar for two days, unless somebody gave him one.

He got to Greenwich safely, and found Mr. Flitter on the Terrace, accompanied by whom he went to one of the taverns that look so agreeably on the realms of the whitebait beyond the Hospital. There was a large private dinner in the regular coffee-room, so a smaller apartment on the ground floor had been substituted for it, and here Mr. Flitter and Mr. Straggles fortunately got a table by the window, as a party was just leaving. Mr. Straggles unfolded his napkin, and disposed his green-and-white wine glasses, and assumed the air of a *bon-vivant*, as though he had always dined at the Clarendon.

The room was quite full. There was that pleasant buzz of life which always makes a coffee-room dinner so agreeable, and, to our thinking, assists digestion. Mr. Flitter ordered a course of fish—“the usual thing,” he said, “with a duck and peas, or something of the sort.” Then he inquired of his friend what he usually drank. Mr. Straggles usually took half-and-half; but the elegant

atmosphere of the room, and the contiguity of ladies, awed and refined his feelings, and he suggested "pale ale."

"Oh, of course," said Mr. Flitter; "but I mean besides. Punch, you know."

"Certainly, certainly," said Mr. Straggles.

"And Badminton, eh? of course, some Badminton?" continued Mr. Flitter.

"Of course," said Mr. Straggles, as he felt that the ladies were looking at them. But if Mr. Flitter, instead of Badminton, had suggested Chippenham, or Devizes, or Cricklade Cup, the answer would have been the same.

The fish was brought, and then, in his first excitement, Mr. Straggles quietly told Mr. Flitter that he had never dined at Greenwich before. Whereupon Mr. Flitter told him to eat lots of everything, and then he would do the proper thing.

So Mr. Straggles commenced with water *souchée* (which at first he conceived to be flounder broth), and ate all the parsley into the bargain, and then got timid at the imposing waiter who came to change his plate, and said he preferred the same; but this the man would not allow by any means, and took it away with a strong-minded effort. After which, Mr. Straggles was lost in admiration of the stewed eels, and in wonder at the pickles which nestled amidst the salmon cutlets, and in fear at the pyramid of whitebait which soon made its appearance; so much so, that he drank deeply of punch to regain his presence of mind. And then he watched Mr. Flitter closely—how he slanted his plate with a wedge of bread, whilst he squeezed the lemon over the cayenne pepper; how he helped himself recklessly to ravenous quantities, and devoured them as voraciously: all this Mr. Straggles did, even to slapping one bit of brown bread-and-butter upon another, face to face, as carelessly as though he had done so for years.

"Well, Straggy," said Mr. Flitter, "what do you think of whitebait? What are they like?"

"I can't make out," replied his friend. "Baked curl-papers, I should say, were the nearest things to them. But the bread-and-butter's first rate."

"More bait," ordered Mr. Flitter; and more after that; and then devilled bait; and the Badminton. Capital stuff it was too. "I'll tell you how to make that," said that gentleman. "Pour out a bottle of *vin ordinaire* into a jug, and shoot a bottle of soda-water into it. Add some sugar, and some knobs of Wenham ice. Put a suspicion of your favourite liqueur, or a phantom of lemon-peel, into it, and there you are. Ah!"

This last expression accompanied a deep draught, which Mr.

Straggles imitated to perfection, as the devilled bait had made his throat all of a blaze. And upon this he put pale ale, finishing with champagne, which Flitter would order.

"I don't seem to care much about any more to eat," said Mr. Straggles, as he felt the whitebait almost up to his throat.

"Oh, but you must. Here are lovely peas! and duck, too! or perhaps you'd like some of this ham?"

Mr. Straggles thought he would; it was less to eat. But it was so salt that he was obliged to have some more Badminton, and soon got very jolly indeed.

"This is doing it, Joe, isn't it?" he said.

"Rather," answered Mr. Flitter. "Waiter, some of that old port."

"And strawberries, sir?—yes, sir," replied the man.

The dessert came; and the day wore away. The sunset gun was fired; the yachts below the taverns took down their flags; and the lights alone, before long, marked the passage of the steamers towards the Pool. The company, too, left the coffee-room; but the large party up-stairs, who were going to finish with a ball, kept the tavern alive; and as, in addition, Mr. Flitter told the waiters he expected a friend to sup there before he started from the Aberdeeu wharf at midnight, they were not disturbed. Mr. Straggles had drunk himself into a halo of poetry and romance, and when the band above played "The Standard Bearer Quadrilles," he sang the song so loudly that the boys below the windows cheered him for very admiration. All this time Mr. Flitter was looking anxiously from the window upon the river, as, like Mariana, he gazed "athwart the glooming flats" of the Isle of Dogs. At last he said, when Mr. Straggles had uttered his dying declaration that he would not name the lady of his love,

"Straggy, you havn't such a thing as five pounds about you, have you?"

"Lord, Joe! no!" replied Mr. Straggles, as much astounded at the possibility even of such a thing being entertained for an instant by his friend, as aghast at the question.

"Because," continued Mr. Flitter, "I must have had my pocket picked coming down; I can't find my purse."

"Why! what can we do?" cried Mr. Straggles, now in real terror.

"Well, I can't see exactly; we must get away without paying."

"Without paying! Now, Joe, don't! we shall be taken up for swindlers."

"We shall, if we stay," said Mr. Flitter. "But of course I shall pay; you shall bring back the money."

"I won't go away," answered Mr. Straggles, now quite gravely. "I'll stop in pawn."

"You can't. Now, look here, Straggy. Would you ruin me, your friend, and dash down ten thousand pounds at a blow? Ha! here he is. Stop!"

As he spoke, the splash of a pair of sculls was heard, and a boat came underneath the window. A waiter entered the room at the same time, so that Mr. Flitter could not attend to it; but he ordered coffee, and the minute the door closed he beckoned to the waterman, who stuck a note on a boat-hook, and gave it to him.

"I thought so," said Mr. Flitter, as he read it hurriedly. "Some of them have seen me in London, and Sloman knows I'm here. It's about the time too. Wait a minute."

Mr. Straggles did as he was ordered—he could do nothing else—and waited in great fear and trepidation.

As soon as the coffee was brought, Mr. Flitter placed a bottle of wine that was on the sideboard in Mr. Straggles's hand; and, assuming a determined sepulchral voice, pointed to the river, and said,

"Descend into the boat!"

"What! there? Pooh! stuff! I can't. What do you mean?"

"What I say; the bailiffs are after me, and I shouldn't wonder if they take you too, as an accomplice. Get into the boat; we have not a second to spare. Away!"

Bewildered with the dilemma and the drink, Mr. Straggles took the bottle, and climbed down the ironwork in front of the window, scarcely knowing what he did. Mr. Flitter followed, when, as he was stepping down, he heard a cry, followed by a plunge amongst the billows on his lee, which the last steamer had called up, and, on turning round, could just see the luckless Straggles disappearing under the surface of the water, his hand in the air, however, clutching the brandy bottle as firmly as his friend "The Standard Bearer" ever did his colours. In his flurry he had stepped on the side of the boat and gone over. Fortunately, however, it was not deep. Mr. Flitter and the waterman pulled him in again; and then the former said, "Go ahead!" as the dark form of the Boulogne boat was observable coming down the river.

"Now, give way!" he said. "Get as close as you can on her larboard side, and go as if you were trying to race her."

As Mr. Flitter had expected, there was somebody on board looking out. When the boat came up, the man pulled near enough to her paddles to be interesting; a rope was thrown out and caught, and, when it was dragged amidst the boiling water in their wake to the side, Mr. Flitter pulled Mr. Straggles after him,

and they stood on the deck. The waterman received a few shillings; a hurried recognition passed with the steward, who appeared to be a friend; a waiter was seen looking out of the distant coffee-room window; and the Boulogne boat kept on as if nothing had happened.

"I'm dripping!" were the first words that Mr. Straggles uttered, as, with chattering teeth and trembling frame, he formed a small pond about him on the deck, till it ran out at the scuppers.

"Dear, dear! of course you are," said Mr. Flitter. "Here, come down to a berth, and get off your clothes as quickly as possible, and take some brandy."

Mr. Flitter dragged Mr. Straggles down to the cabin, and assisted him to skim off his wet clothing. Then making him swallow a glass of pure brandy, he put him into a berth, and told him to keep warm whilst his clothes were dried in the engine-room; and that he would let him know when they were near Gravesend, where he could be at once put on board the first steamer that was going up to town in the morning.

* * * * *

Mr. Straggles had curious visions. He dreamt he was a whitebait in a river of Badminton, wearing patent boots with red tops, and fighting for liberty and truth as Mr. Flitter's standard bearer; then everybody he knew in the world was dining with him in a vast coffee-room, where all the tables kept going round and round in the air like an up-and-down at a fair, when the river rose, and all the fish got out of the dishes and attacked the company, until they called in the pensioners, who drove them out of the window; and as a beautiful girl of the party was just going to ask him to take her out for a row in a continental steamer, he awoke.

It was broad daylight. The paddles had ceased to work, and the people had left their berths, and were now rushing down and snatching bags and baskets from remote corners of the cabin, ere they hurried up again. There were many feet shuffling overhead, and uncouth voices were heard vociferating unintelligibly all at once.

"Gravesend!" cried Mr. Straggles, as he started up; "and I am undressed! Halloo! Steward, where are my things?"

"All right, sir," said the man, bringing his things dry and folded. "We've had a rough passage, though."

"Passage! Why, where are we?"

"I thought you'd wonder," said the steward. "You slept so heavily we couldn't rouse you, all we could do; so Mr. Flitter said we had better leave you alone. Where do you go?"

"Oh, back to London by the next boat."

"Yes, sir, that's the *Harlequin*—she goes at twelve to-night; and there's the *Magician*, to Dover; and the *Queen of the French*, to Folkestone, at eight to-morrow morning."

"Dover! Folkestone!" gasped Mr. Straggles. "What the devil do you mean? Where am I?"

"Just under the *douane*, sir, in Boulogne harbour," was the reply.

Mr. Straggles gave a shriek of anguish, and covering his face with the sheet, to the discomfort of his legs, gave way to the wildest despair.



MR. STRAGGLES HAS A DAY'S FISHING.

MR. STRAGGLES contrived to get back from Boulogne, to which place he had been so unceremoniously carried against his will. But if Mr. Roberts, of the boarding-house, upon the port, had not kindly given him credit until he got a remittance from England, he would have been in a sad way, for his friend appeared to be no better off in France than at home, in spite of his gigantic expectations; in fact, he disappeared suddenly one night after a game of billiards at the *café*, at the corner of the Grande Rue, and was never heard of again. The men who were building the new bridge that crosses to Capécure, dragged the harbour; and the gardeners below the ramparts of the Haute Ville searched the ground for the body, believing that he had committed suicide in consequence of his losses that evening, which were known to be great. But as the winners never got anything, it was fairly presumed that Mr. Flitter had never paid them; and as no body was found, it was also, with some plausibility, conceived that he had not made away with himself. In Boulogne, however, he was not. After the first shock, Mr. Straggles got on well enough. There were some pleasant people at the house, and it fortunately was not a busy time in Loudon, so that he did not fret at his absence. He walked to Portel and Wimereux, and half fell in love with a pretty girl who waited at the inn at Wimille, on the right hand of the route going towards Calais, and if she is still there she will repay the walk. He went to the balls at the Etablissement and Salle Delplanque, and knocked over more old ladies and chairs in his polking than had ever been known; he had cheap baths from the little sentry-boxes that wheel down to the edge of the tide; he walked through mud to the chapel of the hamlet of Jésus Flagellé, and was perfectly scared at the votive offerings hung round it; he joined in all the rows about the parsons which so interest the English residents; and, finally, was sorry when he left. But it was a case of "must," so he braced up his nerves, and gave his last farewell to his fellow-boarders, who ran along the pier, by the side of the steamer, to see him off, and finally waved their handkerchiefs from the rounded extremity, until the *Queen of the French* was out of sight, on her way to Folkestone. For a few weeks after he returned, Mr. Straggles kept very quiet,

for his funds partook of what the City articles called "the general tightness of the money market." He limited his dinner to a shilling, and gave up all notion of cabs anywhere. He found discarded clothes of past gaiety, at the bottoms of his drawers, that would still do—in fact, like old clothes generally, they were wonderfully improved by inaction, for turning an old coat into drawers is as beneficial as turning a worn horse out to grass. He did without suppers, and never went to the play but with a newspaper order—not an actor's, because he knew he should pay for it with remarkable interest when the benefits came round. Instead of having his pennyworth of the *Times* every day, he found out some coffee-rooms where he could indulge in the fragrant berry, or whatever it was, at a cheap rate, and could read the papers for nothing; and whenever he felt elastic, and wanted an excursion, he paid a penny, and rode from London Bridge to Hungerford and back again, or took a short trip in a Parliamentary train, and walked home. But through it all he was still the same joyous Straggles.

It was a touching thing, though, when his friends called upon him as they were leaving town. One was going to Gravesend—that was Mr. Knapps, of Mincing Lane; another was on his way to Ramsgate—that was Mr. Howard, of the West End emporium. Mr. Brown, of Brixton, came to inquire about Boulogne; and Mr. Ricketts, the stockbroker, spoke largely of pheasants in Surrey. In fact, everybody was off somewhere, and Mr. Straggles not liking to be thought behind them, kept a gun in his chamber, which he always began to oil and polish when any one came to the door, hung up a shooting-coat and fishing-basket behind it, threw old gaiters and thick shoes carelessly about the floor, and hoisted an ancient hat, with artificial fly-hooks stuck all round it, on the back of an old arm-chair, telling everybody that he meant "to see what the barbel were like next week," which, as he had not the least idea, was, in a measure, a praiseworthy and instructive investigation.

"What! going fishing?" asked his friend Mr. Hackle, one day, when he called.

Mr. Hackle was a decided fisherman; that is to say, he believed in the killing properties of baits that the fish could never possibly, by any chance, have met with before—old cheese, rusty bacon, raw dough, and the like. He never caught a fish, were it only a bleak, but he allowed it to play and flap about on the top of the water before he pulled it out. He never crossed a rivulet without stopping to watch it with much affection for half an hour, perfectly satisfied if, at the end of that period, he saw a roach wriggling up

against the stream; and he never passed a weedy, froggy, willow-bordered swamp, but he would say, "I'll be bound there are some fine jack there." *Au reste*, he wore blue spectacles, and made other things he fondly believed to be flies, from bits of old hat, bed feathers, and the lining of chairs.

"Straggles," observed Mr. Hackle, "you coop yourself up too much—quite like a caddis worm; you want air and exercise. Come with me for a day's fishing. I see you've got a basket."

It was all Mr. Straggles had got in the angling line, and even that had not been purchased for its proper purpose. On short trips, he was accustomed, once upon a time, to carry his wardrobe in it; but now he had given that up. For the rude omnibus cads used to call him a "jolly fisherman," and "young Ikey Walton," and the little dirty boys persisted in walking by his side, singing, "In the days when we went hanging, a long time ago," and Mr. Straggles could never stand the little boys. Once, to be sure, he had taken to fish, mildly, in the Serpentine, but the boys drove him away; for they used to come and sit down by his side, entering into conversation, without any encouragement or introduction, recommending him to "Pull him out, sir; you've got him at last!" telling him, "There's a bite!" examining his kettle, and committing other familiarities, until at last they came to pelting his float, which ultimately drove him away.

However, he agreed to go with Mr. Hackle; and he bought a cheap rod and line at a fishing-tackle-maker's, whose stock was so large that he had been for years selling it off "at an enormous sacrifice," and who kept a tin fish suspended over his door, which had spun a dozen bilious opposite neighbours away from their abodes, by its restless gyrations. His friend was to provide baits and appliances generally, and the day was fixed upon.

When the appointed morning arrived, Mr. Hackle made his appearance, so laden with apparatus—rods, and poles, and rakes, and landing-nets; bags, and baskets, and kettles, and a camp-stool—that he looked as if he was about to start on a pedestrian tour round the world, carrying everything with him. Mr. Straggles merely carried his own basket with some sandwiches in it, from the "splendid-glass-of-ale" shop; and then being told that they were going to a very likely piece of water beyond Hampstead, he started with his friend, guided entirely by him; for if Mr. Hackle had proposed dragging for lobsters at Sadler's Wells, or angling for mackerel in Highgate Ponds, Mr. Straggles had that reliance on his piscatorial experience that he would directly have accompanied him without a misgiving.

They got up to Hampstead pretty well, and without much

annoyance. The boys, to be sure, were as vigilant and attentive as ever, occasionally inquiring of Mr. Hackle, in a friendly commercial spirit, "What he would take for his straw hat without the lining?" and they also asked, in allusion to his spectacles, "Why he didn't light his lamps?" and gazing at Mr. Straggles's tall proportions, they recommended him "to mind he didn't knock the moon out when he came back again at night." But the anglers merely smiled at these sallies, pretending to be highly amused thereby; whereas, internally, such was far from being the case.

It was tolerably hot when they had toiled up the last hill to Hampstead Heath, and as they had still some little way farther to go, Mr. Hackle proposed they should ride. Mr. Straggles directly consented, and without much difficulty they soon found some animals.

There are various localities in the vicinity of London where donkeys flourish; they have peculiar districts, like hops and sausages. In the suburban ruralities of Primrose Hill many fine studs may be met with; at Blackheath they form a staple means of peregrination; at Gravesend, they delight the poor deluded people who fancy they are at the sea-side, and bear them to shrimps-and-watercresses-devouring localities. Still more distant, at the convivial Margate, they bake in the sun on the chalk cliffs above the Fort, until they become as tawny as the slippers of their riders; and at Ramsgate, the adjacent bay of Pegwell—promising and hunger-implying name—owes much of its commercial importance to the means of transport they afford. But it is at Hampstead Heath alone that they are to be seen in all their glory. What matters it if the saddles be old and time-worn? An expanse of calico, bound with gay tape, conceals the blemishes and improves the appearance. So have we seen the tail-coat, when somewhat seedy as to the lappels, converted into the dress garment by a silk facing. If they are idly inclined, are there not boys to run behind, and provoke activity by a pointed stick? originating the offensive but widely-known comparison between donkeys and lollipops, inasmuch as the more they were licked the faster they went. Did a donkey from Hampstead ever get tired?—did it ever break its knees?—was it ever blind?—did it ever run away?—did it ever shuffle off any other coil than the mesh of string, tape, tin, jack-chain, and old thongs that formed its bridle? Never.

The fineness of the morning, the light air, and the holiday altogether, coupled with some pale ale at Jack Straw's Castle, so elevated Mr. Straggles's spirits, that he sang the "Standard

Bearer" louder than ever; and following Mr. Hackle, held his fishing-rod like a lance, and assumed a martial bearing, only interrupted when his feet dragged against the ground, which, from their length, they occasionally did. They crossed the Heath, and wound along the pleasant roads beyond it; and at last stopped at a gate, where Mr. Hackle said they were to dismount, as it must be the one he had been told of by a brother angler. They then sent the boys back to the inn, with directions to bring them some bottled ale, together with bread and cheese, at two o'clock; and, pushing their way through a wet copse, the trees of which caught their tackle every minute, arrived at the edge of a piece of water.

"I say," observed Mr. Straggles, "look at that board: 'Persons fishing in this water without permission will be prosecuted as the law directs.' We mustn't try here."

"Oh! that's nothing," said Mr. Hackle; "a mere form. Besides, nobody can see us: we're quite hidden."

"Well, I suppose you know best," answered Mr. Straggles, with resignation, as he sat down upon the ground. "Here goes."

Mr. Hackle was less precipitate in his movements; for with your anglers it is a great point to elaborate everything as much as possible. He performed a great many intricate feats with his floats, and caps, and split shot, and plummets; and spread everything out with great display at his side. Then he made several small stone dumplings, with a light crust of bran, clay, and gentles, which he distributed, here and there, in the water. After this he took all his hooks out of their parchment envelopes, one after another, and, having looked at them, shut them all up again. Then, after plumbing his depth, which he did over every square inch within reach of his rod, he found he had too many shot, and took some off. Then he had not enough, and was obliged to put some on again. Next, his top-joint was the wrong one, and all his tackle had to be taken to pieces again. But as all this is a great part of the contemplative man's recreation, Mr. Hackle was rather entertained than otherwise.

"Why won't my float sail along upright?" said Mr. Straggles, pointing to his porcupine's quill, which was lying horizontally upon the water.

"You're too deep," answered Mr. Hackle.

"No I'm not," said Mr. Straggles, taking him in a moral sense. "I really don't know."

Whereupon Mr. Hackle set him right, put on his bait, and committed it to the depths of the water; upon which, Mr. Straggles, feeling all comfortable, began to sing:

"Upon the tented field a minstrel knight
His lonely midnight standard watch is keeping."

"Hush!" cried Mr. Hackle; "you mustn't do that."

"What?" observed Mr. Straggles, stopping suddenly; "not sing? Oh, bother! What did I come out for?"

"To fish," said Mr. Hackle, gravely.

"Well, so I do," returned Mr. Straggles. "Hullo! here he is! I've got him!"

And hereat he pulled out a fish with a jerk that sent it whirling over his head, and even amongst the willows behind him.

Mr. Hackle here uttered those common sounds of regret which are as difficult to spell as the horse-impelling noise which the ostler beat his boy for not knowing how to express in letters on his return from school. "You should play him," he continued, "and draw him out quietly. Ho! there's a bite. Now, you see, I have him. So ho! it's a roach."

"How can you tell?" asked Mr. Straggles.

"How should I, but by my eyes. Can't you?"

"Duce a bit. I've got a fishing-book, with pictures, but they're all alike. Pull him up."

"No, no—steady," said Mr. Hackle; for this was evidently the great pleasure. "See how he fights! Now I have him."

"No you don't," cried Mr. Straggles, as the fish suddenly vanished, shooting off into deep water. "There now, which is the best way?"

Mr. Hackle was so angry at the failure, that he only replied, "It was all the noise Mr. Straggles was making."

"Well, never mind," replied the other; "be convivial. There's as good fish in the water, I dare say, as ever came out of it. Hurrah! here's another! Why, what the devil is it—a red herring?"

He pulled up the glittering, wriggling fish as he spoke, and showed it to Mr. Hackle. It was a gold-fish; and almost at the same instant Mr. Hackle caught another.

"This is very strange!" he said.

"But famous, isn't it?" observed Mr. Straggles. "Put 'em in the kettle. I've got an old globe at home, and I'll keep them in it. This is fishing with a vengeance!"

"It's not sport," remarked Mr. Hackle, throwing back the prize.

"Oh, isn't it though? What do you do that for?" said his friend.

"Now, pray keep quiet," exclaimed Mr. Hackle.

"Very well; I will then. Let's see who catches the next. Give them some more bait. That's the thing."

And Mr. Straggles commenced throwing in the dumplings so recklessly, that he was obliged to be severely checked. But they went on fishing with varied success; now catching bleak, now the gold-fish again, and now piebald ones, until the time arrived for luncheon.

"I wonder where the donkey boys are," said Mr. Hackle, looking at his watch. "They ought to be here."

"I hear them, I think," said Mr. Straggles, "coming through the trees. Yes—it must be them. Hulloo-o-o!"

"Ullo-o-o-w!" cried the boys, in return.

"All right," said Mr. Straggles; and he turned to receive them, when the trees were put on one side, and two men in velveteen jackets and gaiters made their appearance.

"So, we've got you at last, have we?" said one of them. "Now I suppose we shall find how master's gold fish got into Covent Garden. Out with the handcuffs, Bill, and cripple him first."

The man pointed to Mr. Hackle, who, from his display of apparatus, they took to be the ringleader, and they advanced to take him, having been put up to the capture by the donkey-boys, whom they had met at the gate, bringing the ale, which they immediately appropriated. As they advanced towards Mr. Hackle, all the better feelings of Mr. Straggles deserted him. He ought to have stood by his friend and seen him through it; but his terror was so great, picturing Newgate, Norfolk Island, and even the scaffold, all at once, that he lost all feelings but that of self-preservation. Committing his rod and basket to the water, he darted into the copse, and the next moment was wildly fighting his way through the wet trees and underwood, and trying his strength against that of long blackberry brambles, which, if they did not lie on the ground and coil about his ankles, hung in festoons at the level of his face, and behaved accordingly. He was afraid to look back; but he soon perceived, from the noises behind, that he was pursued, and he redoubled his energy. He went over banks like a bird, stumbled into ditches, recovered his legs, and bolted through fences and brushwood clumps, as if he had been a hunted hare; until at last he came to a wall, stretching to the right and left so far away that he could see no end to it. His pursuer was close upon his heels. Fortunately a hurdle was leaning against the wall, forming a rude sort of ladder, up which he hurriedly scrambled, and got to the top just as the fellow came up and tried to clutch his ankle. He had a vague

bird's-eye view of a house and pleasure-grounds below him ; but without pausing an instant to look where he was going, he leaped wildly away from the grasp of his follower. There was a loud smashing sound of glass, and the following instant Mr. Straggles found himself on the floor of a hot-house, having broken through the roof, and borne down the vine beneath his weight, which, whilst it broke his fall, now formed the bed of crushed bunches of grapes upon which he was lying. He was directly seized by the men about, including the one that had pursued him. The proprietor of the grounds, who was also a magistrate, was from home at the time ; but the round-house was close at hand, and to that dreary dungeon Mr. Straggles was immediately consigned, with the intimation that he would not be long without company, as his accomplices would soon join him. And then they closed the double doors upon him, and left him to his miserable reflections.

* * * * *

He, however, procured his liberty, and was indebted to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for the manner in which this was effected, for Mr. Hackle and the magistrate had long known one another as fellow-contributors. They had each sent sketches of extinct fonts and unintelligible inscriptions, and enormous rusty keys, the locks whereof had long been missing, to that light periodical ; and when the latter returned—which was just as Mr. Hackle was about to be locked up with his friend—he immediately ordered them to be set at liberty, and even prevailed upon them to dine with him. It appeared that a grotto and fountain in his garden communicated with the water in which they had been fishing, but that the depredations constantly committed had got to such a pitch, that he had set his servants to watch and apprehend all invaders.

And so the affair ended in a laugh, and the gentleman insisted upon Mr. Straggles keeping all the fish he had caught. But they never proved a source of much pleasure to him : he could not regard them without shuddering at his past scrape. And as for fishing itself, he so far hated the very name, that had it been possible for him to have bought up every copy of “*The Complete Angler*,” he would willingly have expended his last farthing in so doing, rather than another disciple should be gained to what he termed “the slowest twaddling any rational man could believe he found amusement in.”

MR. STRAGGLES IS PREVAILED UPON TO GO A SHOOTING.

THERE are certain things the appearance of which on the stage of a theatre during the performance of a pantomime ensures their doom, either to total destruction, insult, or treatment of the worst description. As examples, we may mention sedan-chairs, frying-pans, bandboxes, and old ladies; for the first, we know, will be broken in at its top by the reckless attempts of the clown to obtain a seat to which he had no right; the second will have its bottom knocked out in forming a species of pillory necklace for the maltreated pantaloons; the next will be crushed and comminuted to atoms in that ill organized outburst of popular fury, in which, at the same time, fish and images always come off so poorly; and the last—the defenceless old lady—will have to undergo such a series of frights, ill-usage, and even violence, in comparison with her years, that the extent of suffering which female heroism can support under certain circumstances is really marvellous to contemplate.

Just as these things are upon the mimic stage, so was Mr. Straggles upon the theatre of real life. With every good intention and caution in the world, he was constantly in trouble. Whether acting for himself, or striving to stand in the shoe of another, he always, so to speak, put his foot in it. He was the sedan-chair that only led to the injury of the person he tried to succour; he was the frying-pan that was sure, somehow or another, to hamper those he associated with; he was, in a row, the humbug bandbox that always came off worst; and it is a question if the clown ever felt so wickedly towards the old ladies as did the impudent boys in the street whenever he appeared. And so, with his constant dilemmas, it is a wonder he ever engaged in any expedition at all. But his nature was so inclined to festivity and relaxation, that his perpetual scrapes had little effect upon him; indeed, he was always ready for anything in the way of an excursion at the slightest hint, a want of funds being his only stumbling-block.

It was a very slow time in town. The leaves had fallen at

Vauxhall; and such people as were left living on one side of the squares began to see those on the other, once more, through the withering foliage. Nearly all the theatres were shut, so there was nowhere to go at night; and it was too chilly and dreary to sit at home, and not cold enough to have a fire. People fought against coals and candles as long as they could, apparently in the belief that they could drive winter back by thus opposing his firmest allies; but the water was cold on the washhand-stand in the morning, and the toilet was more hurried than ordinary; and those who still would not demean themselves by yielding to another blanket, were glad to throw their dressing-gown upon the bed. The paletot of last spring was pulled from its closet to see what it looked like; forgotten trousers of once loved winter check were hunted out from the depths of wardrobes; and collections of stout boots, discarded for the gaiety of the summer sunlit pavements, once more came into favour, as they were passed in review with respect to their capabilities of new soling. Dingy muslin curtains, that it is not worth while washing, gave place to newly dyed moreen; and you began your dinner in daylight, went on with it in neutral gloom, and finished it with candles, which, as soon as lighted, made the black fireplace doubly gloomy, in spite of the dismal little soot-peppered ornaments of snipped silver paper that hung from its bars. Mr. Straggles sat at dayfall, at this season, in his chambers, thinking what to do. Inclination said, "Go and have a mild cigar and opera at the Eagle;" prudence suggested it were better to stay at home and work. But everything looked so cheerless in the cold twilight, that he was about to rush out to avoid all chance of autumnal suicide, when he heard the wheels of a cart stop in front of his house, and two minutes after the porter brought him up three partridges with a note tied round their necks. Having spent the usual time in wondering who could have sent them, he broke the seal, which bore the impression of a percussion-cap several times applied, and read as follows:

"DEAR OLD STRAGGS, — Herewith you will receive a leash of birds—not 'three partridges,' as I know you will already have called them. And now to business. Where these came from there's more than you can have a notion of; the poultry shop at the bottom of Holborn Hill, if it was to rise and fly away, wouldn't give you an idea of our coveys. So the governor hopes you'll come down and have a sly at them, in return for your kindness in seeing about his commissions in London. We can find you a gun, but you must bring everything else. The Brighton Rail-

way's the nearest line, and get down at Hayward's Heath. So, mind you come, and

"Good afternoon.

"Yours no end,
"JOE."

"Bramblesly, Oct."

The birds and the note put Mr. Straggles to much perplexity. For, in the first place, you cannot send a more distressing present to a man in chambers, who dines out, than a leash of birds. He does not know what in the world to do with them. The first day he hangs them up to look at, and hopes that somebody will call to see them, and believe in his connexions. On the second he begins to think whom he shall present them to, and the inquiry puzzles him until the third, when he wavers between six friends of equal claims upon his attention. Arguing the case occupies two days more, until at last they get very high; and not having any servant to send on the instant with them; and mistrusting other methods, he gives them to his laundress, who sells them to the poulterer, and where they go to after that the dealer only knows.

This was one cause of distress to Mr. Straggles; the other was, that his experience in shooting was limited. He knew that, to let off a gun, you put a percussion-cap on a little knob, and pulled a thing underneath; and then if you had previously rammed some powder down the barrel with a bit of paper, it made a bang and kicked against the shoulder; but to this was his knowledge confined. As to taking an aim at anything, he might as well have attempted to shoot the moon, at which, in its commonly received sense, he might have succeeded; so he made up his mind to go to a shooting gallery, thinking that half a dozen shots at three-half-pence each, he should be ready for anything. So have we known landsmen about to take a voyage, go off quite contented with a sixpenny handbook on swimming.

There is in Leicester Square a remarkable establishment, appropriated to many purposes in its different compartments. It was once the repository of Miss Linwood's needlework, a popular exhibition, which, however, we never saw ourselves—nor, remarkably enough did we ever know anybody who, being driven to the point, could say he had either—but which is believed to have been immensely popular with well-regulated country families visiting London once a year as a compulsory pleasure. At that time a little Turk upon horseback used to trot across three panes of glass in one of the windows every half minute, to the delight of

the passengers, especially the boys, who always enter keenly into everything exhibited for nothing. But when the needlework went, the Turk went with it; and then the establishment became so divided by different interests, that few could tell whether it was a theatre, a wine-vaults, a billiard-room, a coffee-shop, a gunsmith's, or a Royal Academy; or if they could, they never knew, amidst the ascending and descending steps, and doors, and passages, which one to take to get anywhere. The Egyptian Hall is as mystic in this respect as is the interior of the Pyramids. Nobody ever went to see Tom Thumb without finding himself amongst the Ojibbeways by a wrong door; and the visitor to the Model of Venice, having been so confused as to pay separately for the Speaking Machine, or the Fat or Mysterious Lady, ultimately never got there at all. But the Piccadilly labyrinth is nothing to the one in Leicester Square. A confusion of sounds tends further to bewilder the visitor; the noise of everything is heard everywhere else. The click of billiard-balls; the music of poses plastiques; the thwacking of single-sticks; the cracking of rifles, and the stamping of delighted Walhalla-ists—all mingle with each other; and it is only by taking refuge in the lowest apartment, which partakes of a coffee-room, a cabin, and a cellar, that you find repose. But Mr. Straggles had been told there was a good gallery here, and with some trouble he at last found his way to it.

It was a large room divided down the middle; one half being taken up with swings, ropes, bars, ladders, and various contrivances for performing fearful feats of strength with; and the other was appropriated to shooting against an iron target at the end. A gentleman in shirt-sleeves, whose life was passed in loading fire-arms, received Mr. Straggles as he entered.

"I want to shoot," observed Mr. Straggles, with assumed indifference.

"Yes, sir. Rifle, sir?" said the assistant.

"Yes, a rifle," replied Mr. Straggles, unconcernedly. He supposed it was all right, having some vague notions of rifles, and game, and Hurons, and dead shots, from Mr. Cooper's novels. But he would have answered the same had the man suggested a musket or a blunderbuss.

"Stop a minute, sir," said the man, as he painted the target with whitewash. "Now it's ready."

Mr. Straggles took the gun and aimed at the target in the most approved style. He was one of those gentlemen who constantly take aim with their walking stick at different objects, to impress bystanders with a belief in their sporting propensities.

"You haven't cocked it," said the man.

"Oh!" replied Mr. Straggles, "to be sure; that's it. Now then."

As the sight of the gun described various flourishes about the bull's eye, Mr. Straggles pulled the trigger, and a black mark appeared on the extreme verge of the target.

"That's not so bad, is it?" asked Mr. Straggles.

"Very good shot, sir," said the man.

"And all the shot are together, ain't they?"

"Beg your pardon, sir?"

"I mean, all the shot went out of the barrel in a heap."

"No, sir," said the man, smiling. "Rifle, sir, 's loaded with ball."

"Oh, to be sure it is! What a fool I am!" returned Straggles.

"Yes, sir," said the man.

Mr. Straggles fired away his eighteen-pennyworth with varying success, and was then recommended to try and hit the swinging bird, which hung from a string before the target. But this he could by no means accomplish, and the bullets went into the floor, and ceiling, and wall, and everywhere, in fact, but near the wooden pigeon.

"It's very difficult," he said. "I think it must be because I shut my eyes, to keep the cap from flying into them, when I pull the trigger."

"Very likely, sir," said the man. "Gentlemen are often taken so when they're not used to it."

"Oh! I'm used to it enough," said Mr. Straggles, quite indignant; "but I'm nervous. I never could bear anything swinging before my eyes. That hit him, though!"

By chance it did. By the common laws of motion the bullet was compelled to go somewhere, and that time it went against the bird. The man complimented Mr. Straggles; and he was so pleased with his skill, that he wrote to Joe Tollitt the next morning, accepting his invitation; and giving up cigars for the time, spent all his money in shots until the day arrived.

In one of the streets between the squares of Soho and Leicester, Mr. Straggles found out a valuable shop, which exists still, for we passed it the other day. It was particularly calculated to attract incipient sportsmen, for the window was filled with every implement for the field, set forth in the most alluring manner. There were guns, air-canes, and pistols; flasks, cartridges, and cap-holders; together with packets of gunpowder, and in a corner such piles of catherine-wheels and crackers, that had the house taken fire, there is no knowing where the neighbours would have been blown to. And to excite timid sportsmen there were

labels such as these: "Look! twisted barrels, patent breech, and back action—and all for 4*l.* 10*s.*!" or, "The real pheasant astonisher, only thirty shillings!" And to an air-gun was affixed, "Fancy stunning down a bird with this, and no keeper the wiser—three guineas!" Whilst a brace of pistols was labelled, "Men of England! have you your wives' or sisters' honour at heart? Buy these for two pound!" Mr. Straggles was overcome by the friendly nature of these communications, and he bought several accoutrements, including a packet of cartridges, one of which amused him all night in dissecting, and wondering what its contents of shot, sand, and little network wire cage could be meant for. And when he considered that his arrangements were perfect, he put himself into the third class of a slow train, and got out at the nearest station to Bramblesly that evening. The evening passed in chat with his friends, and about half-past ten—a whole-some country hour—he retired to bed, all ready for his first appearance, as a sort of Young Hawthorne, on the morrow.

With the first beams of the rising sun, Joe Tollit was at his bedroom door; and as soon as Mr. Straggles was dressed, he set him to punch an old hat into small discs for wadding, which occupied him until breakfast. During this meal, Joe was constantly clicking the guns, to see that they were all right, to the great terror of Mr. Straggles, as the barrels were generally pointed to his head. They were not loaded, to be sure. Of that he was aware: but empty guns occasionally did such wonderful things, that he was very glad when the direction was altered. And at last, after breakfast, they went and let the dogs loose, and started for their day; Mr. Straggles being accommodated with a double-barrelled gun, which he had as much notion of handling as if it had been a cornet-à-piston, and, knowing this, he turned it off, saying, "Ah! if that had been a rifle I could have shown you something."

It was not all fun at first. They had to walk over ploughed fields, and into swamps, and through dreadful hedges composed entirely of blackberries, holly, and stinging nettles. And Mr. Straggles did not understand the dogs as he ought to have done. He had formed his notions of their attitudes from a tin pointer on a chimney-pot behind his chambers; and not seeing them copy this exactly, he occasionally gave them a kick on, when they stopped, thinking they were pointing at rubbish; and then he was rebuked by Joe. For take it as a rule, that, in certain sports, as well as at whist, your dearest friend will insult you, and you have no appeal. Now and then some birds rose, and went whirr-r-ring off, one of whom Joe generally brought down; but if he didn't, Mr. Straggles was so long taking his aim to make sure,

that they got away comfortably, before he fired, into foreign covers, and felt small. But he was still self-confident outwardly, and always said, "Ah! they'd better not come in my way again!"

They did not, however, come to the countless flocks of birds Joe had spoken of, although the man with them beat the bushes into splinters. Indeed, it seems an immutable fact in all sporting invitations, that hopes held forth are seldom realized. For if a man tells you as an inducement that somebody caught twelve dozen gudgeon at a particular pitch the day before, be sure you will never get a bite. Rabbits vanish underground, like barbel worms before a lantern, at the approach of a visitor; no one who had expressly asked a friend to course ever found a hare; and we should mistrust that day's subsistence which depended upon all the birds brought down on estates where they were said to be as thick as flies in a sugar-tub.

After going on for some time without a chance, during which Mr. Straggles longed to shoot at the small birds, but was not allowed, Joe came to the conclusion that they had been frightened into other covers.

"There's a shaw over there," he said, as they at last halted to take some refreshment, "which I know swarms with them."

"Ah!" gasped Mr. Straggles, as he put down a little tub, from the cork-hole of which he had been taking a long pull of ale. "Well, let's go there."

"But you see it's not the governor's land; it belongs to Worthy, the brewer."

"Well, then, let's stop here, it's very jolly. Have you heard 'The Standard Bearer'?"

Joe would not say he had not, because he foresaw Mr. Straggles would offer to sing it, and then the day would end in conviviality. So he said he knew it well, and so ripped the symphony in the bud, which his friend was beginning to hum; and then he added, "Our lands join, to be sure; so if we skirt the copse, we may do something. Come on."

They started off again, but with no greater success; still they kept hearing shots around them, which proved there must be some birds somewhere, until Joe got desperate, and, crossing the boundary, plunged into the adjoining property, telling Straggles to follow him, as well as he could, through the tangled brake.

"I say, Joe!" said Mr. Straggles, suddenly, from the centre of a nut-bush.

"Well, what is it?" asked his friend, who was down in a quarry.

"I see a pheasant; shall I shoot him?"

"Of course; but put him up first."

"No, I can hit him better as he sits. Here goes."

Mr. Straggles took his aim, and pulled the trigger. Bang-bang! went both barrels in rapid sequence; and the echoes carried out the sound into a prolonged rumble like thunder round the corner of the world.

"Why—I say, Joe—I'm d——."

We break off; there is no occasion to state what Mr. Straggles said he was.

"Well, what's the matter?" inquired his friend.

"Why, he's sitting there just the same as ever; not even frightened."

Joe climbed up the side of the old quarry as his friend spoke, and looked in the direction of the furzes.

"Why, Straggs," he said, "that's a wooden dummy, put up there to trap the poachers. What a pity to have wasted your powder and shot upon it."

"Never mind," replied Mr. Straggles; "'on we goes again,' as they say"—he was getting ahead with the effects of the ale—"I'll punish 'em yet."

"Hush!" said Joe; "I thought I heard voices."

"No," said Mr. Straggles; "echoes, Joe, nothing more. Listen!"

And hereupon he imitated a cornet-à-piston with the air of "The Standard Bearer," and waited for the echo. But there was none.

"Ah! that's nothing," he said; "some echoes only repeat voices, not notes. There!" he continued, as he gave the finishing ram down to his charges. "I should think that would do it."

"I'd rather keep away from you," said Mr. Tollit, "if you've no objection."

"Not at all," observed Straggles. "I'd rather; then if I hit a bird, we shall be sure about who's done it."

The pair accordingly separated. They forced their way through the copse, and were now upon a ridge of furze field that sloped down towards another shaw similar to the one they had just left. Mr. Straggles was first, and was pushing vigorously on, when a pheasant rose from the lea below them, and the same instant a voice exclaimed, "Mark!"

"Go on!" cried Joe, earnestly. "Here, Juno! Rover! come here! Straggs, do you hear? go on! go on!"

"I'm a going," said Mr. Straggles, misunderstanding him; and again, bang-bang! went both his barrels, and the bird fell.

Elated with his success, he rushed towards where he conceived

it would be found. He bounded over the fern like a fawn — pushed through the furze as if his legs had been adamant, and rushed through the saplings like a thunderbolt, until he came to the clump of nut-trees into which the bird had fallen. As he drove through it, a gentleman and two keepers received him.

“Oh! that is it, is it?” said the gentleman. “And pray, sir, who are you?”

Mr. Straggles was so frightened that he could scarcely speak. He had read of affrays with poachers, in the newspapers, and imagined that he was to be shot forthwith.

“Where’s your license, sir?” continued the gentleman.

A flash of hope illumined Mr. Straggles’s mind. He called to memory a legend he had heard, that nobody could ask for a license without showing his own; so he gasped forth:

“Show me yours first.”

The gentleman directly complied; and took from his pocket a flimsy piece of paper, printed upon with green ink, acknowledging the receipt of four pounds and tenpence from the owner.

“And now, sir, let me see yours,” he continued.

Poor Mr. Straggles! he might as well have asked for a thousand-pound bank-note. Anything like a license could not be found; and although he called Joe as loud as he could, and explained that he was a friend of a neighbour, the gentleman would not believe him, but told his keepers to take him into custody; and between them both Mr. Straggles was walked off from the copse, and, for lack of a round-house, deposited as a poacher in a high walled in coal-yard of the gentleman’s house.

And so passed the first day of Mr. Straggles’s shooting expedition. What adventures his subsequent day with the harriers gave rise to, the following chapter will show.



MR. STRAGGLES HAS A DAY WITH
THE HARRIERS,
AND RENOUNCES SPORTING LIFE.

THE residence of Mr. Tollit, to which Mr. Straggles returned with great joy after his respectability had been ascertained, and he had been released from the coal-hole by the gentleman who had seized him as a poacher, was an old country farm-house. The parlour was kept, like the bright poker in the grate, more for show than use, as generally the family resided in the large kitchen; and the front door had as idle a time of it as the great one of St. Paul's that faces Ludgate Hill, which appears only to have been made to be kept shut. On high holidays both were thrown open, but these came but seldom; and the usual ingress to the house was through the back door from the farm-yard. Mr. Tollit and his son were regarded by Mr. Straggles in the light of that class of relationship, now in its decadence, known as country cousins. We say in its decadence, since it has been ordained that everything in the world should become extinct after a certain time, whether animated or inorganic. In the remains of the vestiges of creation which frighten the holiday people at the British Museum, we find the ichthyosaurus, the ammonite, the mammoth, and a vast crowd of monsters terrible to behold, upon the total disappearance of which we have every reason to congratulate ourselves. In later times, amongst things which were, but are believed in no longer, are executions, high art, five-act plays, stage coachmen, great actors, and Dutch weather houses. Young ladies declare that offers are getting every day more scarce; so are old English gentlemen, prize-fights, and fair horse-races; and country cousins are now passing away as well.

When Mr. Straggles first recollected his old world friends the Tollits, things were differently constituted. They had always lived at Bramblesly, but then the journey was an undertaking: An anomalous gig, something between a private cab and a dog-cart, had to start at some irregular hour, elaborate to remember, and meet the coach in the dim morning twilight, traversing a route that was along a track of ruts crossing a common, on either side of which the fog hung heavily upon the gossamers that sway in grey festoons from heath to furze bush. There were various

motives, too, for this journey. It might be love, or law, or physic; it might be an ambition to talk of town and seize the fashions; sometimes it oscillated between politeness and dividends. But travelling was then a matter of toil and importance, and a real motive was always put forward by the Tollits as an excuse for their visit. They never came to town upon a mere whim.

It then happened that Mr. Straggles used to take beds for them at an hotel. Their common resort, with many others of the same class, was the Sussex Hotel, an establishment bounded on the west by Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, and on the east by the Bolt-in-Tun coach-office. There were inns much nearer to Mr. Straggles's chambers, but the Tollits always went there, because the coach that came from their part of the world went there too. The distance between them was that uncomfortable one which would have been an eighteenpenny fare if it could, but it couldn't; and so the journey was always enlivened by an argument with the coachman—cabs were not patronized then—who invariably got the best of it, until the Tollits bought a little Book of Fares, which they carried about with them in preference to their watches, and which was distinguished in always having the fares between all places but those which they wanted.

The Bolt-in-Tun is much changed now; quiet country gentlemen, who knew it when they were obliged to sleep in town, but never do so now in consequence of the quick transit, would hardly recognize it. Then there were galleries running round it which made strangers imagine they were going to bed out of doors; and at certain hours of the day the visitors would appear from the sleeping-rooms that looked down into the yard, awaiting the arrival of the stage-coach to learn the local news. And there were plenty of coaches then in the yard of the Bolt-in-Tun—heavy, florid vehicles, like so many apoplectic elephants, snoozing under the sheds until the ostlers dragged them forth to be washed and dressed. All night long they rattled in and out, teaching country folks by the noise that they were in London; and in the intervals of their clatter, restless horses stamped and snorted, and shook their harness in adjacent stables, at which they arrived by going up and down inclined planes, like the approaches to the steam-boat piers, or the platform of Astley's, along which the "Untamed Horse of the Tartar horde of Circassia" bears the rightful prince from his enemies, or brings him to succour female innocence, just in the nick of time. But now the coaches have all gone—no one can tell for a certainty where to—the rickety, fore-shortened railway omnibus that shuffles up to the door of the booking-office, and is generally off again before

any one knows that it has arrived, but ill makes up for the deficiency.

In those old times Mr. Straggles was proud to go about town with the Tollits, since, whatever was the exciting cause of the visit, it always had the same results—seeing sights and spending money—and he used to feel that he was, as it were their Mentor. They began to buy things immediately on their arrival. The Jews who haunted the front of the Elephant and Castle found amongst them the readiest customers for their wares, from the Annual with the worn-out plates, to the pewter pencil-ease with the flawed glass seal at the top. And there appeared to be resorts especially appropriated to them, which Mr. Straggles seemed to know little about, although he would not confess it. Exeter Change and Miss Linwood's were in high favour. Cranbourne Alley was alone thought trustworthy with respect to bonnets, and the corner of St. Paul's as regarded books. Alack! Exeter Change is changed altogether; its cutlery has cut itself, and its beasts have become denizens of another district; they have avoided the desert of the modern Exeter Arcadia. Miss Linwood is no more, and her cause has yielded to that of more distressed needlewomen; the fast, shuffling quietude of Cranbourne Alley no longer exists, and the female touters at the doors of the shops appear to shrink from the bustle of the new thoroughfare. The "Scenes in Europe" have retired from St. Paul's Churchyard before Mr. Grant's work of high-pressure, forty-Peter Parley power; and the spirit of philosophy has been diluted into negus to suit juvenile palates.

We laugh at a yokel in London, but a Coekney in the country is a far more contemptible person, and this Mr. Straggles began to feel. For the changes pervading everything did not allow him to assume that mental superiority over the Tollits which he once did. Formerly they were delighted to go everywhere, and see anything: all the singers at the Opera were equally unknown to them, and sometimes they proffered a quiet petition for a playbill. But what the newspapers called "facility of communication" had made them almost as sharp as Mr. Straggles conceived himself to be. Illustrated newspapers, rapidly brought down to their home, gave them an idea of the theatres, exhibitions, fashions, and lions, as soon as himself—nay sooner—for it is proverbial that those living in town are the last to see anything in it. Periodicals of every kind—funny ones with cuts, and sober ones without—put them up to that horological knowledge popularly known as "the time of day;" and London lecturers, whisked down to their literary institutions, left no fresh points of scientific discovery a novelty.

In fact, a visit to town had almost become a "little go," to which the Tollits came up as knowing as Mr. Straggles himself: in fact, more so, being as perfectly crammed in one way as collegians in another. So he was much puzzled how to keep up his character. He found they knew everything, from Jenny Lind to gutta-percha; but he was innately deficient in sporting and agricultural matters, and therefore he determined to assume a knowledge of everything as far he was able.

"Straggs," observed Mr. Tollit, junior, as they sat in the kitchen before the huge fire, at which two fowls were roasting before the wood embers, to the great astonishment of the gentleman addressed—"Straggs, what are you like outside a horse?"

It was a home question. With less uneasiness the member of a respectable pious country family might have been asked, "What was his opinion of Carlotta Grisi compared with Ellsler." So Mr. Straggles, after a moment's incertitude, replied:

"Oh—all right!"

"I'm glad of that," said Joe, "because Jack Rasper's harriers are coming over here to-morrow, and we are going to mount you, just by way of a change. The governor said he was sure you'd take a fence."

"Take offence!" observed Mr. Straggles; "what at?"

"At?" replied Joe; "anything: a double ditch, with a quick-set in the middle—an ox-rail—a row of hurdles—or a light park pailing. We'll put you on something that will take you over them if you can stick on."

Stick on! It had a terrible sound. It spoke of that impressive sort of horsemanship, that clinging ride of terror and incertitude which characterized the equestrianism of a monkey. And yet Mr. Straggles did not like to confess his feeble-mindedness on this point to his "country cousins." He found that they could criticize Alboni and speak of the Nassau balloon as readily as he could himself, and therefore determined not to appear behind them, he accepted the proffered steed.

Not without many misgivings, though; for his practice in riding had hitherto been very limited. He had, it is true, gone on donkeys to Pegwell Bay, and the place near Gravesend where the watercresses grow; and he had once ventured into the Park upon a hack horse, where he had contrived to keep his seat, albeit the many salutations he received from ill-conditioned boys, on his journey thither, had well-nigh abashed him. But he would not confess his fears; and he thanked Mr. Tollit as coolly as though he had been accustomed to take stone walls and five-barred gates every-day of his life.

"Old Jack will be just the thing for you," said Joe, "because he knows the country. He's rather high actioned, but that's a fault on the right side; because he won't come down like your daisy-clippers that shuffle a penny-piece from a turnpike road. I don't think you have any top-boots, have you?"

Mr. Straggles had not—in fact, he might just as well have been asked for a pair of epaulettes or a turban from his wardrobe.

"Ah, never mind," said Joe; "we'll fit you out in a proper style. You can have those, if you like."

Mr. Tollit pointed to a pair that were lying up in a corner, and were of that kind which John Bull is always accustomed to wear, according to popular pictorial authority. They were heavy and large, with brown tops and round toes; and looked as if they could have done duty upon emergency for the celebrated seven-league boots of the legend.

"Why, I could get into them altogether," said Mr. Straggles, as he looked, first at them, and then at his own ten-and-sixpenny Alberts. "If I wore them I could never lift my legs."

"Oh yes you could," said Joe. "Besides, if they are so heavy, what of that?—they'll steady you, you know, when you're once up, with their weight on each side."

And to prove the truth of this assertion by a model, Mr. Tollit stuck two forks in a cork, which he afterwards elevated on a pin, and then made the entire apparatus revolve and oscillate on the foot of an inverted wine-glass.

"There, don't you see?" he went on, "you can't knock it over; you're the cork, you know, and the forks are your legs and boots. They'll be regular ballast to you; you'll never get lopsided if you wear them."

The night that Mr. Straggles passed, after the hour of bedtime arrived, was indeed a fearful one. Half dozing, he was haunted by vivid pictures of all the equestrian mischances that had ever occurred. John Gilpin kept flying round his bed, as he had seen him pictured, wigless and scared, with the two broken bottles hanging against his hips. The unfortunate Mr. Button, whose fearful ride to Brentford was only equalled by that of Bürger's Leonora in horror, appeared going through all those rapid acts of horsemanship that have become matters of history, riding now on the neck, and now on the extreme verge of the crupper, with his face to the tail, or across the horse like a sack, with all the other remarkable positions which that devoted tailor was made to assume. Then he called to mind the story of the nobleman, who, staying at a friend's house, after a day with the hounds, upon being called to go to cover the next morning, cried, with an

air of haggard mistrust, "What! do people go hunting twice?" And, lastly, he recollected an uncomfortable book upon the Epping Hunt, with pictures of dilemmas more perilous than any one man could have been supposed to have survived; as well as a set of coloured prints of some great steeple-chase, where, from the start to the come in, the view had always been taken just as a gentleman rider had been pitched upon his head, or been left behind a "double," or plumped into a brook, or gone over altogether with his horse, as if upon an invisible centrifugal railway. And these desperate scenes merging into his sleeping visions, kept him starting from his slumbers all night, with the impression that he was falling from the roof of a house, fashioned like a saddle on a mighty horse.

Bright Chanticleer proclaimed the day at last, according to his custom on hunting mornings. And Mr. Straggles awoke from his unrefreshing sleep. Nothing, however, is ever in reality so terrible as we fancy it in the dead of the night, and the sunlight reassured him; so much so, indeed, that as he was dressing, he began to sing "The Standard-Bearer," and from this he went into various appropriate melodies connected with southerly winds and cloudy skies; and "harked forward" more than once as he was shaving, and said "Tantivy!" But he used this latter word in a reckless manner, not exactly knowing what it meant, or at what especial time it ought to be spoken—whether it applied to particular positions in the chase, or whether it was an expression of joy which might be indulged in at any period, as Scotch gentlemen are wont to shout "Hoo!" in a reel.

Still Mr. Straggles was not perfectly at ease; his gaiety was of that forced, reflection-drowning kind which Mr. Punch indulges in when he sings on the very eve of his execution. He did not make a good breakfast, in spite of Mr. Tollit's urgent recommendation to him "to lay in a good foundation," in which country folks imagine the whole secret of health and longevity is comprized. However, he contrived to get into the boots, rather than put them on; and as they were large enough for him to tuck his trousers' legs into, he did not require knee-breeches. His terror now increased: he heard the sound of gathering men and horses in the homestall, and, as the clock struck ten, Mr. Tollit told him all the preparations were completed, put a whip in his hand, and then the melancholy procession—so to speak—started.

There were a great many people in the farm-yard, and the owner of the pack, to whom Mr. Tollit had given his permission to come, was carrying on an animated conversation with the dogs.

"Law!" observed Mr. Straggles, as he saw them; "I thought

they would be greyhounds. Don't greyhounds hunt hares? I've got a picture of some doing it."

"That's coursing," said Mr. Tollit; "all very well, but slow fun to what we are going at. No, these are the right sort—crosses between the heavy old harriers and the little fox beagles—all bone and nose; too good almost for thistle-whippers."

"Slow fun to what we are going at!" repeated Mr. Straggles to himself. Why, in the picture he alluded to, the horses were going at a splitting gallop as it was; what could he be expected to do more. He was so struck by this idea, that he lost Mr. Tollit's remarks, and was only recalled by that gentleman's observing,

"Now, here comes Old Jack. Come, Straggs; now's your time."

The horse was brought—a tall, bony, Irish animal, that looked as if it could have taken a barn on an emergency.

"Stop a minute," said Joe; "you can't reach the stirrup. Here, Oakes, give Mr. Straggles a leg up."

To show his alacrity, Mr. Straggles gave a lively spring, and the man hoisted him up at the same time, but with such power, that he shot him clean over, and he came down on the other side.

"Never mind, Straggs," cried Joe, laughing; "you'll soon be used to it. Now—up!—that's it. How are the stirrups?"

"Oh, they're all right," replied Straggles, who was sitting with the leathers so short that his knees almost met over the pommel.

"No, that won't do; you must let them out five holes at least," continued Joe. "There, that's better, isn't it? Now you are——"

"Quite jolly," replied Mr. Straggles; but the air of comfort was but put on. He spoke it, as the boy who first gets into cold water, when bathing, gasps out, "B-b-b-beautiful!" to his fellows on the bank, in reply to their questions concerning temperature.

"That's all right," said Mr. Tollit. "Now keep by me, and I promise you we shall be well up with the dogs. My galloway has beaten many a thorough-bred, but then I know all the fences."

"I don't care particularly to be up with the dogs," suggested Mr. Straggles, mildly.

"Oh, but I do. Keep your knees firm to the saddle, and your toes straight forward, or you'll be nicely caught by a gate-post, if two or three go through at once."

Mr. Straggles did immediately as he was directed. In fact, if

he could have tied his legs in a double knot under the horse's girths he would have done it.

They rode about the fields for a little time, opening gates and shifting hurdles all very pleasantly, and Mr. Straggles said he liked it very much. But before long a hare was found, the dogs gave tongue, and off they started.

Away they went—through the copse and over the turnip-field, down the lane, and across the water—splash—like a whirl of leaves blown along by the autumn wind, and at last they came to a large meadow which the dogs crossed diagonally.

"I—say—Joe!" exclaimed Mr. Straggles, convulsively, as he wanted four hands to hold the reins, his hat, his whip, and the pommel of the saddle all at once—"I—say—Joe—how—are—we—to—get—out—of—here?"

"Over the ditch," replied his friend; "see there, where those fellows are taking it."

Mr. Straggles with difficulty looked ahead, and saw various mounted forms rising up on the horizon of the field, and then coming off and away again. "Oh dear!" he said to himself, "here it comes!"

"Now hold fast, Straggs," cried Joe; "I'll go ahead."

The dreaded spot seemed advancing towards him rather than he nearing it. As it approached, he pushed his hat on tight, clutched the reins, and shut his eyes. There was a violent jolt; he felt himself doing dreadful things in the air that the Bedouin Arabs would have failed in, and the next moment, with an intense shock, he was sitting on some ploughed ground on the other side of the fence, the horse remaining on the bank he had just quitted!

"Why, Straggs, man alive!" cried Mr. Tollit, who had gone over like a bird, "how the devil did you come there?"

"Ah! I wish I knew," answered his friend, completely bewildered. "Which side am I?"

"Oh! all right; you shouldn't have checked the rein just as you were going to leap. Look out! old Jack's a coming."

And the horse, who knew his business well, cleared the ditch and Mr. Straggles too, as Joe caught him by the bridle.

"There, never mind," cried Mr. Tollit; "jump up."

"I can't," replied Mr. Straggles, who was not yet quite satisfied whether he was a mass of broken bones or not.

"Pshaw! wait a minute. Now then, up! There you are again."

Mr. Tollit had got off his horse, and given a second "leg up" to Mr. Straggles, who acquitted himself this time rather better.

Once more they were off, Joe trying to make up for lost time as he flew on over the furrows like the wind. But now Mr. Straggles was not so ardent. He held back behind his friend, who, eager to join the others, did not see what he was about until he had got far ahead of him; and when they had all cleared away round a shaw, he pulled up to breathe and recover himself.

Whilst thus occupied, as he gazed into the next field he fancied he saw the hare running in an opposite direction to that in which she had just been going; in fact, puss had made a sharp double and followed it up, and Mr. Straggles's knowledge of sporting matters went just so far as to assure him that such had been the case.

"Ha! ha!" he said, "now I think I can astonish them a little."

As he turned back, he saw the hounds scrambling over the bank at the top of the next field; and, determined to be even with them, he made a dash at the small ditch that separated them, and in an instant was amongst them. In vain the huntsman shouted; Mr. Straggles, elate with his position, kept tearing on, thinking that now or never was the time to retrieve his character, and soon beneath old Jack's hoofs the dogs were being sent about in all directions. At last, seeing an uncomfortable row of hurdles ahead, he pulled up, and the next instant the owner of the pack was by his side.

"What the (something) are you about, you infernal scoundrel?" he cried; "take that, you (something else) tailoring snob!"

And as he spoke he made the lash of his heavy hunting-whip wind round Mr. Straggles's shoulders each time, with stinging force.

"Leave me alone!" screamed our hapless friend; "I couldn't help it! Oh dear! Hi! Joe—Joe Tollit! Leave me alone!"

Again was the arm raised for punishment, when Mr. Tollit fortunately came up; and poor Straggles, who had not that insensibility to the "horrors of the lash" which is only enjoyed by the clowns of the ring, appealed to him in writhing and piteous accents for an explanation. This was given, and all amends made immediately with the ready heartiness of an English sportsman.

* * * * *

Mr. Straggles hunted no more that day, nor, indeed, did he ever again; the next morning he packed up his things and returned to town, still sore with his chastisement as regarded his shoulders and not less uncomfortable generally from his unwonted horsemanship. He has returned to his profession, and made a holy vow never to plunge into sporting life again, but in future to

confine his fishing to that for crabs from the end of the Chain Pier; his shooting to—after dinner—eighteen-pennyworth at the gallery in Leicester Square, or for nuts with percussion-caps at Greenwich; and his riding to that tranquil domestic exercise which Gravesend and Thanet, or the more contiguous expanse of the mild Blackheath, can afford, without risk of neck-breaking or horsewhipping.



THE GILT-BUTTONED YACHTSMAN

(DEDICATED TO THE AMATEUR MARINES WHO DID NOT GO OUT.)

SEE West Cowes thronged with gazers—the race has begun,
And that swell with the girls thinks the scene “rather fun.”
The Club-house is crowded—the steamers are crammed—
Yachts, gigs, and Hythe-pherries together are jammed.
In a somewhat short jacket, with air of command,
Whilst he eyes all the rigging he don’t understand;
As the bark is blown over the mildest of seas,
The Gilt-buttoned Yachtsman feels “rather the cheeze!”

Now, up ye bold mariners, over the sea,
Launch out on the Channel so daring and free;
No longer round Harwich or Babbicombe creep,
But, hardy as Norsemen of yore, rule the deep.
The sea topped with breakers, the heavens like lead,
The deck running water from big waves ahead,
With a yearning to be once again on “firm earth,”
The Gilt-buttoned Yachtsman is ill in his berth!

War curses the earth, and the cold Ural blast
Sweeps over the steppes to our army at last,
Half-clothed and half-famished! Do such ills betide
His old cherished friends of the Lobby and Ride?
You have called each “old fellow”—behave, then, as such—
A few English comforts would cheer them so much!
But instead of embarking to soften their rubs,
The Gilt-buttoned Yachtsman talks trash at the Clubs.

And now, at Spithead, by the trains carried down,
To watch the review, we find out the whole town:
How truly our brave sailors fought, and how well,
The Baltic, Crimea, and Azoff can tell.
As the “gallant” bark bobs up and down like a buoy,
Turning out but a costly and fine-weather toy,
When he thinks that he, too, could have witnessed each scene,
The Gilt-buttoned Yachtsman feels horribly mean!

OF FAIRS, FAIRINGS, AND FAIRIES.

I tell of festivals, and fairs, and plays,
 Of merriment, and mirth, and bonfire blaze,
 I tell of brooks and blossoms, birds and bowers,
 Of April, May, of June and July flowers,
 I tell of groves, of twilights, and I sing
 The court of Mab, and of the fairy king.

QUAINT old Herrick—from whose pleasant synopsis the foregoing lines are taken, reading as though they were meant to be written upon green leaves, and sung only to the music of a glancing rill, tumbling, gurgling, and whirling down a hill-side over glittering pebbles, and through beds of sunny forget-me-nots what a mercy it was, with his summery and country feelings, that he was born in those happy times when May was green and warm, and such things were as fairs and festivals; before daisies were driven, back and back, from their prairies like wild tribes, or trampled under foot by civilizing colonists; when all the practical use to which steam had been applied was in removing the tight lids from the state-prison kettles of the middle ages!

How would his heart have broken gradually—(there were hearts, too, in his day; real home-made hearts, warranted sound, not very clever imitations—Birmingham hearts with sentiments of electrotyped brass, which the “frequent robberies” called into fashion in later times, like spurious plate)—how would it have gone piecemeal, one string after another, in the fashion of a harp in a hot room, if he could have witnessed the desecration of his groves by “junctions” and “extensions;” of his twilight by gas and colza; of his real fairs by fancy ones; of his festivals and fairies, by what professional philanthropists call “an improved condition of the people,” and country policemen.

We regret this state of things as deeply as he would have done, but our heart has not yet broken. It is incrustated with the barnacles of the world’s rubs, as old submarine timber is coated and preserved by other *crustacea*. We cannot tell whether this may, or may not, be an advantage. We only know that so it is; but that, notwithstanding, we lament the gradual decay of all those pleasant things, which Herrick sang about, so rapidly hastening to the state of organic remains. Man has not yet been

found in the form of a fossil—why not, we leave it to the geological disputants to determine—but we firmly believe that in a few ages, the British Museum, should it be still existing, will be graced with fossil fairies and petrified maypoles.

Of those objects quoted at the head of our paper, the departure of the fairs and fairies are most to be lamented. They went together, and within our recollection. We know not where to, but are comforted in a theory of astronomy—that the stars are suns to other solar systems; and that, if this be the case, perhaps one of these brighter orbs, where improvements have not arrived at the high-pressure pitch of our own globe, has offered them an asylum.

Not many years ago the village in which we lived, scarcely a score of miles from London, could boast both of fairies and rustic festivals. It was a quiet, sleepy-looking place, off the high road; and when you ascended the hill near it, on a fine summer's afternoon, you saw its steeple peeping above the foliage in which the houses were embosomed, with the weathercock dozing and glittering in the warm sunlight; and all looking so tranquil that it required no small degree of harsh matter-of-fact persuading to make yourself believe the place was really inhabited by the bustling and industrious natives, who squabbled and wrangled as they carried on the trade in "malt, brooms, and poultry," for which the Gazetteer told us the place was remarkable. There were long, long lanes, too, whose thoroughfare was the best compromise between turf and Macadam ever known, going away into the country, and arched over by bending trees, which in the absence of other excitement appeared to me bowing to one another all day long for amusement. And the limes that overhung the pathway across the churchyard grew at one point so close to the chancel window that they swept its casement, as their morning shadows fell, in quivering patches, upon the old brasses and tablets of the interior; whilst without, the sunlight darted through their leaves to flicker on the green turf of the quiet graves below.

Beyond this was a wooded pasture where the fairies lived. Nobody we knew had actually ever seen them, although everybody else knew somebody that had. But we were sure they were there, for the rings where they danced were very plainly seen; and in hot summers, when everything else was parched up with drought, these rings were always fresh and green, as though a circular spring of water ran beneath them. How the mushrooms grew on these rings too! Tight, button-like little fellows, lifting up their heads above the grass, no doubt on purpose for the

fairies' own use, but whether as food, tables, or umbrellas, we never knew. It was something of a mystery where the tiny spirits went in the daytime: we opine that they never were caught in it, but followed the twilight round the earth, riding on its last shadows. A young lady who wrote poetry in our provincial paper, and was thought to be a little mad, said they lodged in the cowslips. But this was nonsense: the children could never have made chains with the petals if such had been the case.

It was on this spot, with its high wavy boundary of trees, that the fair was also held. And it *was* a fair—a downright earnest one, where you could buy a fiddle for sixpence, and not tender a five-pound note for a *Louis Quatorze* pen-wiper or a wire-gauze nothing, worked with floss silk impossibilities, and get no change. There were shows, too—wonderful shows—we have never seen any like them since; the exhibitions of London have, in fact, merely excited a feeling of contempt. Nothing of Landseer's ever came up to their canvas of the "Lioness attacking the Exeter mail!" The surprise of the gentleman on the box in the fashionable coat, the terror of the respectable lady inside, the agony of the horses—it was grand! And how Maclise's great pictures fell in our estimation when we thought of the vivid cartoon which showed "The Circassian negress with the silver hair!—The smallest man now travelling!—The black wild Indian captured by the bravery of a British officer!" All these marvels, together and alive, were exhibiting to elegant company of all nations, in a beautiful room with crimson drapery for a ceiling. The Indian fed on raw meat—real raw meat from the butcher that supplied our own table, and he was a man above suspicion; indeed, he was twice overseer. The Ioways never did that! Certainly the interior of the caravan was not of the splendid description represented outside, but then a painter's license is very great, as the Academy portraits, especially, yearly prove. What a blessing is photography!

All day long the people from the neighbouring villages could be seen coming over the fields towards our fair, on every side; rosy-faced girls, in smart cotton prints that would have shamed your *mousselines de laine* into utter insignificance, as much as their cheeks would have outdone those of the metropolitan *belles* who wore them; smart young fellows, who looked like country editions of the chorus in "La Sonnambula" and the "Elisir d'Amore;" chubby children, who had dreamt of trumpets, gingerbread, and halfpence at their actual disposal, for months previously. What a day it was for everybody: and what a great one for the Red Lion public-house! Alas! the Red Lion public-

house became an inn, then a tavern, and is now a railway hotel. But then it stood on the edge of the fair-green, out of the dust and crowd, yet not too far removed but "the swarming sound of life" came pleasantly to its door, and here the visitors rested, and drank its famous ale—such ale, too!—like liquid amber, through which the bubbles rose in myriads of tiny balloons, hastening to be drunk. The secret of brewing it has evidently been lost, with those of painting missals and making mummies. And there was amusement, too, for those who rested here: the wandering curiosities strolled from the crowd to exhibit before its doors. Here the small boy in ochre-coloured tights, which fitted indifferently, sang the song standing upon his head; here the Dutch girls carolled their *Lieber Augustin*—nobody knew where they came from, except from "abroad," and that was a locality somewhere in France, comprizing India and everywhere else, in the judgment of the audience; certainly we preferred their singing to Heinefetter's or Devrient's; indeed, we do not think the latter would ever have been so popular with the villagers as the broom-girls. The only person who never thought much of them was the host's daughter; but this was because a gay fellow, who was much struck with them, was strongly suspected of being her "young man," and it required all his wit, and more than his usual fairing, to make all smooth again. And these fairings were very smart; they were of the same class as those objects of *virtù* which young English gentlemen of playful temperaments, and who are not proud, throw at with sticks at the races—pin-cushions, thimbles, and money-boxes. We never knew the swains buy "bunches of ribbons" in our time, and therefore look upon the vague "Johnny"—of whose long stay at the fair a lyrical tradition is extant—to have been a fiction.

At night the revelry must have scared the fairies; what laughs and pretty screams, and "Done, thens!" resounded on every side. Fancy-fairs do not terminate so now-a-days; goodness, if they did, how popular they would become! There was always a game at "kiss in the ring" before dark. Imagine what "kiss in the ring" would be in the Regent's Park Gardens, and all the stall-keepers and patronesses joining in it! And for a benevolent object too!

But we have been idly gossiping of things long past, forgetting they have gone. Our fair is as much an old extinct festival now, as setting the watch on St. John's eve, or meeting in Fenchurch Street to gather in the may. Our fairies exist no longer, but doubtless, like other broken-up families, have emigrated; where their green rings could be seen on the fair-green, there is now a

railway embankment. The noble trees that surrounded it have fallen, and summer and winter, day and night, engines fly by, blazing, gasping, screaming, roaring, and exulting savagely in their own infernal powers; flinging their glowing cinders right and left to scorch the once velvet turf, and scaring the cattle into downright madness as the steam shoots out from their burnished valves, in passing what were formerly such quiet pastures. Mobs of strangers, too, overrun the village, who get a ride and rheumatism at a penny a mile in cheap excursion trains; and perking cottages, looking as if they had retired from London upon incomes, are springing up everywhere.

We know not if all this innovation be good—we cannot tell; it may be—at least ingenious gentlemen who can write large books tell us that it is so, and we suppose they are right. But we would give a great deal to behold our old-fashioned rustic fair once more—not the suburban riots which now adopt the name. Sometimes we dream of one, and see the old amusements over again; but it is only to be awakened by the blowing of a battered horn, announcing the departure of a miserable omnibus, which half a dozen times a day carries unsympathizing strangers backwards and forwards, to and from the melancholy building, in form and proportions so like the Morgue at Paris, which they call the “station.” And this, too, on the very spot where the fairies danced, and the dear old festival was held!



SWEETS AND BITTERS.

A BUFFO LYRIC.

It is decreed that man should lead
 A life without alloy,
 But from its cup, the draught should sup
 Of sorrow, mixed with joy.
 And though some pleasures may o'erflow
 Without a chance of pain,
 Too oft, alas! a shade of woe
 Will follow in their train.
 And should you question what we sing,
 And doubt our moral trite,
 Pray listen to the truths we bring,
 And own we're in the right.

'Tis sweet into some fair one's ear
 Your tale of love to pour;
 But rather awkward, when papa
 Is listening at the door.
 'Tis sweet to wander side by side.
 The bright moon to behold;
 But not so pleasant, when you find
 Next day you've both caught cold.
 'Tis sweet to hear her lips confess
 That marriage is her plan;
 But most distressing, when you find
 That you are not the man.

'Tis sweet when some one sends a cheque
 For debts long given o'er;
 But most annoying, when the bank
 Has failed the day before.
 'Tis sweet to get an Opera-box
 For nothing in the spring;

But not so pleasant, when you find
No great *artiste* will sing.
'T is sweet when to America
From bailiffs you take flight ;
But not so pleasant, when you find
The packet sailed last night.

'T is sweet to see the morning sun
In all his radiancee bright ;
But not so pleasant, when it proves
You have sat up all night.
'T is sweet to hear the watch-dog bark-
At least so Byron said—
Sweet to be waken'd by the lark,
And called up from your bed ;
But not so pleasant, when the dog,
Barks day and night as well ;
Or when the lark's at your expense,
As pulling off the bell.

'T is very sweet to some gay ball
Receiving an invite ;
But rather awkward, when you go,
And find it's the wrong night.
'T is sweet to be pick'd out to take
Some beauties to the play ;
But very awkward, when you find
That you have got to pay.
'T is sweet to buy some comie sheet,
For lots of fun to look ;
But very awkward, when you find
'T is not our little book.

A STREET SKETCH.

(July 9, 1851.)

OORAY-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y!!! Bang! Here she comes, Bill! Ooray-y-y-y-y-y!!! Rang-dang-dang-dang! Now then, Missus, one way or the other! Rang-dang! Rang-dang-dang! Ooray-y-y-y-y-y-y! Rang-dang-bang-kling-klang! Bang! Bang!! Bang!!! Where are you a shovin' me under the 'orses 'eels? Hur-ray-y-y-y-y-y-y!!!

God save the Queen! It is long after midnight, but the streets are alive with life; and the mighty stream eddies round the horse soldiers on guard, and nearly hurries the policeman on its current. The gas stars light up the road like day, and flash on the breastplates and helmets; the people are taking early places on the kerbs; the boys have appropriated to themselves all the churchyard railings, and building hordes, and mountains of wooden pavement on the line; the heavy Life Guard chargers are moving their hoofs about as daintily as though they imagined that a lady's little foot was likely to be under all of them; and with renewed hurrahs, and bell clanging, and distant guns, and braying trumpets, through Temple Bar, which appears, from the Strand, to be the portal of a temporary city of light and banners, on comes the Queen!

They have held high festival at Guildhall to-night, and the riches of our mighty city have flown right and left to do honour to her Majesty. But we would not have given much to have seen her there, otherwise than as the chief personage in a grand mob. It is here—at midnight, in the streets amongst her people—that we feel our heart rising into our eyes as we watch her progress and hurrah with the best of them.

Look at her, European democrats, and republicans, and liberators, and patriots, and all other names of restless scamps who bawl about "freedom" and "light;" and, having nothing to lose, plunge your countries into bloodshed and misery before you scramble off to England, in which you ought to arrive, if practicable, at a cart's tail. Look at that young woman, so honoured, and so secure in the honest affections of her people, that although her guard is as nothing compared to the crowds in the streets,

she sits there as calmly as if she were in her own room in Windsor Castle. Dare but even to scowl at her, and you shall be yelled and cheviéd along the causeway like curs on a race-course. Look at her smiling face as she passes, and the roar of enthusiastic recognition becomes louder and more continuous until she can scarcely acknowledge it. And then look at all those good folks who are cheering and crushing round her carriage in thousands. They have no secret police or spies after them except the clever detectives; they do not know what domiciliary visits are; they have never been "disarmed;" they may all make gunpowder in their outhouses, or cartridges in their back kitchens, all the week long if they please; they have no passports, they can leave England when they like, and return at their pleasure; if they had common sporting permission, they might all have carried double-barrelled guns and cutlasses about the streets all night for their own diversion; and yet the Queen is safer among them than she would be in the centre of a belt of bristling bayonets and artillery! The *cortége* goes on, and the public once more take entire possession of the streets to stare at the illuminations. What a festival it is! Everybody seems to have a party to-night in every room of the house. We never saw so many decanters as are visible through the first-floor windows; and there is Master Brown, who would light up the V. R. himself from the window, in broad daylight, so excited and anxious was he, and has sat behind it ever since, to show his connexion with the spectacle, and will not go to bed until the last wick has expired in the smell; and there is Jones and Bunting, who have taken advantage of their neighbour's gas star, and hung a flag from their second floor, which catches all the light therefrom, and makes a great effect at a cheap rate, whilst their neighbour, whose banner is obscured by its own shade, like the clock at the White Horse Cellar, achieves small triumph. Why, there is a very old friend—to be sure it is—in the shape of a transparency. We can scarcely call to mind when we first saw that, but it is some time ago. It is what is called an "allegory," a sort of thing you see in the frontispieces to old magazines and encyclopædias, and on the ceilings of Hampton Court, which nobody can make out, or, if they can, don't care about. Here we have the Queen in a large scallop shell, riding on the sea, drawn by dolphins, with a lion at her feet, and girls, with great display of shoulders, swimming about her; and Neptune getting bang in her way, with large calves, and deltoide muscles, offering her a trident. By the way, why are calves and deltoides always larger in allegories than anything else? Now all this is very absurd. Heaven

forefend that her Majesty should trust herself with a lion in a scallop-shell, and go to sea. We question, indeed, whether any persuasion would make her do so, so long as she had her own steamer—espeeially to be drawn by dolphins—quite out of the water of course. We know the instant fish get out of their element what freaks they indulge in, and we should mistrust the dolphins. No—no; it is all nonsense; we prefer the reality of the clown in the washing-tub drawn by ducks, and this is all that it reminds us of.

Half-past one! The crowd still keeps streaming on; and we go with it. But the illuminations become rather monotonous. The inventive genius of the folks in this line never gets beyond a V, an A, a star, and a crown; and these wear on repetition. The “lampions” of the Continent are beyond all comparison more effective in their *ensemble*—those pretty, many-coloured globes with which they festoon the streets and cover the houses. One naked gas star over the shop of a dingy brick house is certainly worse than nothing; it puts one in mind of a dirty man in corduroys with a diamond brooch on.

By degrees the crowd thins and the lamps go out, Temple Bar, so gorgeons an hour ago, looks as ragged as a moulting parrot; and the people who sat up all the evening at the adjoining windows to look at it, have gone to bed. The wind is getting up, and the gas stars in and out, the lights and shadows flying about them as on a corn-field. Sometimes the R becomes a P, and then an I, and then a small o; and the fading devices of the variegated lamps assume unintelligible patterns, like the cards of a Jacquard loom, or a constellation without its picture. And now, right away to the east, a glimmer of grey light steals upwards, and the tops of the houses, hitherto hidden by the glare below, begin to show their outlines against the sky.

The mob is gone; the soldiers have gone; the policemen even have gone, except the ordinary numbered letters of the district; and the great heart of London begins to beat tranquilly once more, soothed by the pure air of morning. And now another procession begins along the line of the Royal progress. Waggons of cabbages and vans of flowers come toiling on to Covent Garden; and the Essex labourer whips his team unconcernedly along the streets, where none but the wheels of Majesty were permitted to revolve a few hours ago, and stares with stupid wonder at the dying illuminations.

What a chance for a writer of large sympathies and great purpose that Essex clodhopper affords! How he could be advantageously compared in his stalwart health to the pampere

children of empty state who rode in their tinsel and spangles along the same route two hours ago! How his utility in the great scale of creation could be weighed in sonorous words against that of the idle courtiers who preceded him! Stuff and nonsense! we have seen a swell thrash a snob into fits, and with the greatest pleasure; and, as far as the utility line goes, we wager; if the Essex clodhopper was subjected to a rigorous examination; it might turn out that packing cabbages and driving a team was all he was fit for, or capable of achieving.

Still he is useful in his way, and so are the swells, and so let us hope we all are. And it has been a very pleasant day, and thousands of people have appeared very happy, and we all seem very flourishing and comfortable generally, and don't envy anybody, and are very proud, prouder than ever, of England and our Queen; and so, God bless us all!



THE COMPLAINT OF THE FOREIGN-OFFICE CLERK.

CONFOUND the telegraphs and war,
 And letters sent off wet!
 Confound the Russians and their Czar!
 Confound the whole "Gazette!"
 I thought at last upon the Alps
 That you and I should meet,
 But *now* you are at Chamouni,
 And I'm in Downing Street.

I made my plans, I fixed the day,
 I got some thick-soled shoes
 To "do the Alps;" and on the way
 I meant to buy a blouse.
 I lost myself in visions bright,
 Day-dreaming of the treat,
 To be with you at Chamouni,
 Away from Downing Street.

I thought of those dark pine-tree woods,
 Those fern-clad granite cells,
 Those channels of the glacier floods,
 Those sweet-toned cattle bells.
 That milk—these girls—those *fraises du bois*—
 In fact, those things you meet
 At every turn in Chamouni,
 But not in Downing Street.

And, Annie dear, I thought of you—
 A poet would say "thee"—
 In that "unclouded weather blue"
 (That's Tennyson, not me,
 Or rather "I"), but all my wits
 Have beaten a retreat,
 Whilst thinking you're at Chamouni,
 And I'm in Downing Street.

And worst of all, I thought of *him*,
And came a shadow dark—
That wretched boy, with figure slim,
You rode with in the Park.
I know at every *table d'hôte*
By *you* he'll take his seat,
And you will talk of Chamouni,
Nor *think* of Downing Street.

Annie! I'm sure that you must own
You can't like such a muff,
Whose small moustache has not yet grown,
But still remains like pluff.
His French is vile—he *cannot* dance,
I'd waltz him off his feet;
But muffs come out at Chamouni,
Who're crushed in Downing Street.

I feel that it is very wrong,
But get him to go up
What he, no doubt, would eall Mont *Blong*,
And at the Mulets sup;
And in the dark down some *crevasse*
A proper end he'll meet,
And then, perchance, at Chamouni,
You'll think of Downing Street.

A postman's knock—they're very long—
A letter! and from *you*!
You dear, dear thing! I was *so* wrong!
You're still as nice as true.
And "muff" has not been there at all!
All love then till we meet;
And *you* shall talk of Chamouni,
And I—of Downing Street.

THE FAIRY WEDDING.

ONCE upon a time, all the rich Chertsey meadows, which lie between the Abbey River and Laleham Ferry on the Thames, formed a large plain. Old Master Goring, who was a hundred years old the day King William the Fourth opened Staines Bridge—on which occasion he had the honour of being presented to his Majesty—once told me that he could remember when any one could look right away from the Thames to Nettlebury Hole, standing on the Laleham Burway, without a hedge or plantation to cut the view. And there was not such a range of grass all about the country; insomuch that the above venerable gentleman, who proved in himself that “the oldest inhabitant” was not the myth he was popularly supposed to be, also informed me how he remembered the Royal Hunt once came here, and all the townspeople ran out and left their shops, just as they do now for a balloon descent, or a fight, or a drowning, to see King George the Third, who pulled up his horse, and said to his companions; “I always stop to admire these meadows.” It was my aged friend’s name which once so scandalized our parish in good Mr. Pembroke’s time. For when that esteemed minister asked the farmer’s daughter who was the oldest man, to test the extent of her serious knowledge prior to confirmation, she answered, “If you please, sir, old Master Goring!” Which threw the Sunday schools into such a flutter, that the children had to learn an extra hymn every week during the summer, with closed windows, to do away with the district disgrace.

These meadows always had the reputation of being haunted. The notion had originated in the “fairy rings,” the circles of fresh green grass which covered them, and which were always brightly verdant, however scorched up the surrounding turf might be. A few of these still remain; and the old story, that they were traces of the fairies’ tinkling steps as they danced round the throne mushroom, is still promulgated, but not credited; the first stream of the railway locomotive blew away all belief on its puff of steam.

Elsewise I do not know who would have been bold enough on May-night, or St. Mark’s Eve, or any other haunted anniversary, to have sat on the banks of the Abbey River all alone, and asked,

in the awful language of the Medium, "Are there any spirits present?" I wouldn't. Leaving alone the chance of witnessing, in shadows, the dreary funeral convoy of King Henry the Sixth, as it came up this very river in a rude black boat, with a torch at the head, dripping into the sputtering water, and flashing its light about on the blood-clotted features of the murdered monarch, until they appeared to writhe again with his last agony, without monk or mourner, except the pale spectre of his son, which floated in the air in an armour of dull blue light, clouded in half a dozen places by the gore from his wounds, as it burst forth in Edward's tent at Tewkesbury; leaving alone all this, I say I should be very nervous, for a very great many people have been drowned in the Abbey River. Some have gone with nothing more to hope for in this world, on dark terrible nights, to put themselves at once beyond the power of human wrong and agony; others, stout swimmers, have been pulled down in the bright summer noontide, by long snake-like weeds that twisted round their legs, and bubbled up their last breath with the sun dancing on their struggling limbs through the overhanging pollards; and others, I regret to add, returning with uncertain notions at night from Laleham brotherly love clubs, have mistaken the bridge, and walked cheerfully into the water, cutting short their vocal intentions of drowning care in a bowl, by substituting themselves and the river, in which they have been found the next morning, sitting down at the bottom, with a pipe still in their hands, and, to all appearance, presiding at an extensive free-and-easy of fishes. More agreeable would be the meadow spirits than the corpse-like visions I should expect on the river. They appear to have been always very well-meaning and grateful little persons, if they were only well treated; but if you put them out, they were terribly mischievous; and this brings me to the fairy rings on the Burway, and how they came there.

Old Sir Reginald Wapshott lived at Redwynde Court, on the pasture still marked out in the old histories of Surrey. The Wapshotts had resided ever since the Conquest, as everybody knows, at Almoners' Barns, on St. Anne's Hill, near Hardwicke Court, where Charles James Fox used always to go to the fair, and see the girls dance in the barn, and walk about, eating a great brick of stale gingerbread. They had always been excellent people; and none of them ever rose above or sank below the grade of respectable yeomen, through all the civil wars and turmoils that so upset the middle ages, except this Reginald. He had been knighted for some service rendered to the king; and being a fine fellow to boot, had attracted the attention of Dame Blanche Audley, widow

of Neville Audley, and a daughter of Sir Mark Heriot—the same Blanche who, when a girl, hung to the clapper of the old monastery bell—still to be seen, with its monkish inscription (as figured in Bray and Manning's "Surrey" by my father), in the bell tower of Chertsey Church—to delay her lover's execution. So, Sir Reginald and Dame Audley were married; and he got fine, and did not mix much with his old friends; and perhaps it was on that account that they said Dame Audley's early energy had turned into ceaseless curiosity and tittle-tattle, and that this would one day bring her husband into trouble. Probably they might have exaggerated it; and, truth to tell, the old lady was rather an inquisitive and scandalous "party;" and, indeed, it is a local attribute to be so, for, from time immemorial, the good folks of Chertsey have always felt such a much greater interest in other people's business than in their own, that it is not astonishing the town stands pretty much the same as it did fifty years ago.

One fine autumnal night the moon was full out upon the bowling-green of Redwynde. It was after curfew time—they ring the curfew even now at Chertsey—and most of the household had gone to rest, except old Sir Reginald, who sat in an arbour drinking *Malvoisie*, and pondering on things in general; which is a pleasant kind of rumination, and the very thing for country gentlemen to indulge in, as it involves but little brain weariness. The night was very fine and very still. Not a leaf was moving, and nothing broke the silence except the plash of the fountain as its bright drops fell into the basin, sparkling in the moonbeams. One by one the lights went out in the windows; and Sir Reginald was thinking of bed himself, when he saw what appeared to him to be a cluster of blue sparks moving across the lawn. They came nearer very slowly, and then he made out that they were glow-worms. In the middle of them, like a shepherd in a flock of sheep, walked the daintiest little person he had ever set eyes on. He was not above three or four inches high, and he wore a little cap made of a foxglove bell. His tunic was a large tulip, put on topsy-turvy, and he carried a stalk of lavender for a staff or wand. With this he directed the movements of the glow-worms, placing some here and others there, until he had distributed them all about the turf banks that bordered the plot, when the ground appeared powdered with light; and then the drops of water, that fell with various twinkling notes into the basin, appeared to utter most exquisite music, finer and softer than anything the knight had yet heard; and, as an accompaniment, every harebell in the garden appeared turned to silver suddenly, and assisted in ringing out a peal of marvellous changes.

Whilst this went on, mushrooms of delicate whiteness rose from the turf, always surrounding one larger than the rest; and this grew and grew, until it covered the others, and made a perfect tent, which fresh troops of glow-worms directly edged and spiralled with charming devices, always under the direction of the little chamberlain, who, when he had apparently finished everything to his satisfaction, sat down on a small mushroom and surveyed the arrangements with great complacency.

And now, from every direction, groups of fairies came on to the bowling-green, all exquisitely dressed in the latest elfin fashions, which would require the pen of Mr. Planché to describe, so fanciful and faylike were they. Some of the leading belles had fans of butterflies' wings, and wore plumes from the humming-bird; but their robes of moleskin velvet were more especially admired, above all when trimmed with ribbons of Indian grass and ladybirds, and jewels from the diamond-beetles. Amongst the more exquisite beaux might be seen some very absurd dandies. One wore a "What's-o'clock?" or "Puffaway," on his head, which almost gave him the air of a Kaffir chief; and another, in a tight-fitting suit of bat's-wing membrane, with a jay's feather in his hat, looked almost like a rope-dancer, and quite prepared to perform upon the long spider's thread that stretched across the lawn. Two or three had caps of calceolaria petals; and one silly fellow came in a Templar-looking helmet, formed of a filbert husk, worn upside down, with the forepart cut away. But these were mere coxcombs—empty young swells that could be routed with an awn of barley.

They all took their places about on the little mushrooms as they pleased; and then Master Neville saw that it was a wedding. For the bride and bridegroom had places of honour; and the pretty little lady, in a veil of leaf lace trimmed with thistle down, looked *à ravir*. They made very merry for a long time, during which the old knight watched them from his arbour with the greatest wonder and admiration; and at last they appeared to have come to the end of the mouse-skins of wine which they brought with them. They squeezed out the last drops and then looked about for more, and finally began to complain of their miscalculation with loud lamentations; for their wine caves were far off in the remotest caverns of the Peak of Derbyshire, and the fairies hated to go in there at night, on account of the dwarfs, who set all sorts of traps for them. For every hill, as is well known, is inhabited by dwarfs; in fact, it is owing to their spite, for the rout and confusion caused in the tunnelling of Primrose Hill, that the accidents occur on the North-Western Railway,

where they play such tricks with the switches and signals that the guards and porters have a hard time of it.

Sir Neville thought it a great pity that such festive little folks should be stopped in their mirth for want of wine, and on such an occasion too. So he caught up a bottle of Malvoisie yet uncorked, and threw it amongst them. It came down with a "thug" on the turf, well-nigh smashing two or three of them, and causing great consternation generally. But one of them had seen the quarter that it came from; so, going at once to the summer-house, he discovered the knight, and made an obeisance to him. After which he said:

"We have never yet allowed a mortal to keep his eyes after they have looked upon our gatherings. But you have a good heart, and have prolonged our cheer; and, therefore, we hope you will join our party."

The old knight could not refuse, there was so much grace and courtesy in the little gentleman's manner; so he took a garden-stool with him, and sat down very carefully, for fear of accident, amongst the company. They were all very polite, and pledged him repeatedly, and at last they began to dance; and the beautiful little bride herself came up, and invited him to be her partner. They were not very well matched as to size, to be sure; but it seemed to make very little difference to the fairies whether they were on the ground or off it; so, as Sir Neville could not very well stoop down to them, they flew up to him. And then they began to go round and round and round, until the old knight was fain to drop. But they would not stop—they went, quicker and quicker, until, all of a sudden, a splash of water came down in the midst of them. In an instant everything was gone—fairies, glow-worms, banquet, and mushrooms; and the old knight was lying upon the grass in the quiet moonlight, without a trace of the revelry about him, quite bewildered.

But not for long. The sound of the last music still hung on his ear, when it was broken in upon by the shrill voice of Dame Blanche, who was at one of the windows with a large black jack in her hand, which, just before full of water, she had emptied over the dancers. She had not seen them, for they had all put their caps on, which renders fairies invisible; but she had perceived her husband capering about like a maniac, and believing him to be very far gone in his cups, had taken this summary mode of exacting his attention.

No doubt there would have been an angry dialogue; but, just as it was commencing, the little fairy chamberlain came flitting through the air, and thus spoke to the lady:

"We have been very much irritated by your rudeness and meddling—you have broken up a very pleasant party; and we are equally indignant at your husband's pusillanimity in submitting to such treatment. It was nothing to you that he was enjoying himself; and he ought to have held you in better subjection than to have permitted your outrage. And so, to punish you, as you threw water out upon us, the place shall never be dry again—not in summer, for that would be no punishment, but in the damp, cold winter. And, at the same time, the marks of our last dances shall remain, to remind you and those who come after you of the cause."

Having said which, he disappeared, like Aubrey's fairy, with a melodious twang, and was never seen again.

But the threat was carried out. Every winter when the mist drops from the skeleton trees and the gaunt pollards into the water, and the weirs are choked, and the towing-path covered, the floods roll over the Abbey Meads, and the boats go through the gateways, and the fish get into the fields, and Chertsey becomes almost an island. But in the summer the green rings come out amazingly fresh on Laleham Burway, however scorched up the surrounding pasturage may be. The fairies, however, have never appeared since. I cannot think what has become of them all. Perhaps a few have got a little employment in rapping for the spirits, but a vast number, I believe, emigrated to the Continent, and nestled about Heidelberg, or led wandering lives with their cousins, the Djins and Peris of the East. And this may be what M. Grimm once heard—a tale similar to the above—abroad; but be sure this is the original version, and the only true one.

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